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AUGUST 1951

VOL. 17, No. 12



Edited by

Peter Hugh Reed

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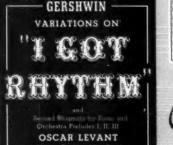


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The American RECORD GUIDE



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The American Music Lover



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A Swarm of Locusts

RECORD RELEASES have been this summer so plentiful and numerous that one dealer, who strives to stock everything issued, has likened them to a swarm of locusts. Having been brought up on a farm, he has had experience with that destructive insect. When I asked him what was destructive about the so-called swarm of records, he contended they were devastating to his overhead costs and often confusing and disrupting to customers. While I understand his state of mind, I still think that he is confusing the issue in his comparison of records to locusts. Yet, he is not the only one that feels like some sort of swarm has descended. 10ther dealers have likened it to a deluge or an avalanche

Usually, there is a lull in the record business in the good old summertime. During the hot months, even the most conscientious record critics have been able to take a vacation, or the semblance of one. But this summer has proved the exception; indeed, it is without precedent in the multiple activities of the record business. Only one of the larger companies - RCA Victor - has abandoned an August release, which may be due to the extensive fall plans of the company or to the fact that during July it issued its fifth LP catalogue release. Most of the latter is curiously confined to light music. Out of 26 LP discs, only four are classical releases. Considering that the deluge of records for the summer months has been preponderantly in the classical market, one assumes that RCA Victor was perhaps not unwise in serving the mass customers who like light music. Still. with so many wonderful performances hypehnated on 78 rpm discs, a lot of us cannot refrain from wishing that RCA Victor had provided more worthy fare in its fifth LP release.

In order to serve to advantage those interested in the many releases of the past few months, your editor thought it would be a good idea to abandon articles during the summer months and have as large a survey of new releases as it was possible to assemble. Many recent releases did not reach us in time for review in this issue. For example, Columbia's August release was not available even at the time of going to press. Delays in monthly releases have been recurrent during the past year, owing to manufacturing problems - I am told - beyond the control of record companies. Other recent releases, already in stores, were promised, but for some strange reason - which has never been fully justified to me - they remain a promise or, if an actuality, they arrive at a far too late date. This is a condition that prevails, and many publications suffer as a result of it. There is, of course, one alternative - to review records from a dealer's booth, which is done by some. But this can and does result in misleading information both on the quality of recording and interpretation.

An Eighteenth Year

September's issue starts our eighteenth volume. We are happy to state that a new member will be added to our staff, the leading audio engineer — H. Vose Greenough, Jr., who will contribute regularly technical comments on the record field and on some of the misleading dissertations among would-be technical writers. Mr. Greenough was the founder and chief engineer of Technichord Records. During the past year, he has been Technical Director and Chief Engineer for the Haydn Society in Vienna, and is now operating as a free-lance engineer in New York.

Not only the record deluge of the summer has occupied our attentions this summer, but the birth of a new periodical — the Consumers' LP Record Review. In response to countless requests from leading record dealers and manufacturers of LP discs, we have prepared a monthly digest in brief to give bewildered record buyers authoritative comment on the vast field of today's recorded literature on LPs in brief, easy-to-use form. This new periodical will complement the Record Guide and, as times goes, will have additional material which will not be found in the parent

magazine. The American Record Guide will remain dedicated to providing informed comment on the leading record releases of the month in the more comprehensive manner.

The enormous response to the announcement of our *LP Review* has been most heartening. More than half those sending in their subscriptions assured us that the *LP* disc is their first choice today, many others state they no longer bought any records but *LPs*. Thus, despite prevailing opposition in other countries, it can be truthfully said that the *LP* record has in the three short years of its existence become the preferred means for music's reproduction with a very large section of American record buyers.

BOOK REVIEW

Schirmer's Guide to Books on Music and Musicians. Compiled, with an Introduction and Notes, by R. D. Darrell. G. Schirmer, Inc. New York, 1951. 402 pages, \$6.00.

AR. D. DARRELL, who will be remembered as the compiler of the original edition (1936) of *The Gramophone Shop Encyclopedia of Recorded Music*, has subtitled this book, "A Practical Bibiliography." He is too modest: it is one of the most practical books on books ever put together.

Among this book's amenities are included a complete listing, a cross-reference which is simplicity itself, and an adaptation of the "dictionary style" which makes any heading or entry easy to find. It does not, unfortunately, concern itself with any books other than those in English and it lists mostly books that are in print and readily available. This is somewhat mitigated by the several appendices on foreign language books - though they are all too sketchy - and by the listing of a book, out of print or not, if it is important enough. In addition, the excessively coy introduction might be overlooked in favor of the very lucid "How to Use" section. With the exception of the publication, Music Index, there is nothing like this volume in English and it well deserves a place not only on every library's reference shelf but also in most music-listeners' bookcases.

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Record Notes and Reviews

THERE IS IN SOULS a sympathy with sounds, and as the mind is pitched the ear is pleased with melting airs or martial, brisk or grave; some chord in unison with what we hear is touched within us, and the heart replies.

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-William Comper

<u>Orchestra</u>

BACH: Brandenburg Concerto No. 4, in G; Cantata No. 152 — Tritt auf die Glaubensbahn; London Baroque Ensemble with Dorothy Bond (soprano) and Robert Irwin (baritone), conducted by Karl Haas. Westminster LP disc WL 5067, \$5.95. AOLD TIMERS may remember a pre-war

FOULD TIMERS may remember a pre-war Fourth Brandenburg by a group from Curtis Institute under the direction of Ezra Rachlin, in which the parts customarily given to flutes were returned to recorders as originally intended (Hargail MW 105). Here is an upto-date recording of an equally devoted performance.

The usual temptation in reviewing such a record is to concentrate upon its musicological features and overlook the performance qualities — a very convenient way of avoiding the embarrassment of modified rapture. In this case it is not necessary, for this Brandenburg stands well among the lightest touched and most winning on records. The cantata appearing as its companion shares these qualities. A less familiar work, it has a soprano aria with something of the charm of Schaffe können sicher weiden, and this in itself should win an audience. Unfortunately the two soloists are not quite all we might

wish they were. Both are accomplished and conscientious artists in the solid English tradition — hardly ideal credentials for a Bach performance in the original German. Accepting this limitation the performance is very good and the recording excellent. —P.L.M.

BACH: Suile No. 2 in B minor; Suile No. 3 in D major; Munich Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Fritz Rieger. Mercury LP disc MG 10068, \$4.85.

▲THE ORCHESTRA stays together and that's about all that can be said for these performances. All the notes are there, one after the other, and all are played accurately enough but I have seldom heard more mechanical Bach. There is no attempt for contrast, all voices remain in their beginning dynamics and a sarabande is just as foursquare as a gavotte. Moreover, the recording is harsh and tinny. Fortunately there are good alternates of the same works: Casals on the second suite (Columbia ML-54348) and Munchinger on the third (London LPS-147). —D.R.

BARTOK: Two Portraits, Op. 5; The New Symphony Orchestra of London conducted by Franco Autori with Jean Pougnet (violin). BARTOK-SERLY: Mikrokosmos Suite; The New Symphony Orchestra of London conducted by Tibor

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Serly. Bartok Records LP disc BRS-303, \$5.95.

▲AN UNUSUALLY ATTRACTIVE DISC. For the first time we get a recording of Bartok's early but impressive *Two Portraits* and Serly's imaginative orchestration of several of the charming pieces from *Mikrokosmos*.

Composed in 1907-08, the Two Portraits; One Idealistic, One Distorted are among the best of Bartok's early products. The first piece is compact, logically developed, and marked by sustained lyric beauty. Bartok has used here, with deftness and sensitivity, a solo violin whose sounds are more often than not woven into the complete tonal fabric. The second section is a fast waltz in which the predominant theme of the first portrait is broken up and caricatured in a grotesque and humorous manner. Expertly scored and ever so varied rhythmically, it provides a striking contrast to its counter-Autori's conducting of this music seems to be very good, and Pougnet's playing is of extraordinary beauty.

Tibor Serly's orchestration of seven Mikro-kosmos pieces and a piano piece written by Bartok for the album Homage to Paderewski is effective on its own terms. By that I mean that these transcriptions make their own points but that they do not resemble in their elegant orchestral dress the lean gauntness of the originals. The arranger himself leads the New Symphony Orchestra with skill and authority.

The recording of both pieces is magnificently clean and spacious. The surfaces are a trifle gritty.

—C.J.L.

BEETHOVEN: Symphony No. 4 in B flat, Op. 60; London Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Georg Solti. London LP disc LLP-316, \$5.95.

▲BY FAR THE BEST performance and recording of the Beethoven Fourth since the Toscanini-B.B.C. of fifteen years ago (RCA Victor set 676) — top flight workmanship by Solti, the LPO, and London's engineers. Well paced, neatly detailed, and perfectly balanced, Solti's interpretation, except for a slight deficiency in phraseological tension and emotional drive, is in every way memorable. The recording is virtually a model, especially in its fidelity to dynamics. One finds here sure enough pps, and ffs about which there can be no doubt. —C.J.L.

BRUCKNER: Symphony No. 8 in C minor;
Hamburg Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Eugen Jochum, and Te Deum;
M. Cunitz (soprano), G. Pitzinger (alto),
L. Fehenberger (tenor), Georg Hann (bass), Munich Radio Symphony Orchestra and Chorus conducted by Eugen Jochum. Decca LP set DX-109, three discs, \$17.85.

▲DECCA is occupied with dubbing some of the fine performances of Deutsche Grammophon, which, it will be remembered, London was importing a couple of years ago on 78 rpm discs. This performance of the Eighth Symphony was issued by London in August 1949, at which time Mr. Luten reviewed it. Though it is at once the longest and one of the most redundant of all Bruckner's symphonies, it contains many beauties and is certainly one of the most ambitiously orchestrated. As H. C. Colles has said, here Bruckner "revelled in the full panoply of the Bayreuth orchestra, with triple woodwind, 8 horns (four to interchange with the tubas), and harps." The scherzo makes use of the harps - Bruckner's first use of these instruments of which he was never fond. There are differences of opinion on the construction of this work. Some like Mr. Luten feel it is poorly constructed and just manages to hang together. Others contend that its construction, especially its long finale, can be profitably studied. The best movements in this work are the scherzo and the slow movement. Needless to say, an uninterrupted performance of a work like this is preferable to one broken many times in a movement. Here, only one movement is broken — the long, deeply-felt Adagio. Jochum's performance is most appreciable - as Mr. Luten has said perceptiveness, poetic imagination, and control over the unusually large forces. Decca's dubbing seems every bit as fine as the original 78 rpm version.

The performance of the *Te Deum* is far better than the one issued by Festival last Fall (see October 1950 issue). The singers and chorus are better balanced with the orchestra, and the two women singers are quite as praiseworthy as the men. The tenor, Fehenberger, is heard to advantage in this performance and the late Georg Hann also profits from what is obviously better microphone placement. Bruckner's *Te Deum*, which Bruckner once suggested to be used as the

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finale for his Ninth Symphony, is a moving work of truly devotional feeling, somewhat redundant but with memorable moments. There is a stronger and more impressive interpretative urge to Jochum's conducting than to Messner's.

—P.H.R.

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CHAVEZ: La Hija de Colquide; Symphony Orchestra of Mexico conducted by Carlos Chavez. Decca 10" LP disc DL 7512, \$3.85.

▲THIS is the first of a group of recordings that Decca has made with Chávez and the Symphony Orchestra of Mexico. The work was commissioned in 1943 by the Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge Foundation as a ballet for Martha Graham. It was Martha Graham who asked Chavez to write a ballet on the Daughter of Colchis.

"Colchis was the barbaric land from which came Medea, archtype of the witch and personification of jealousy and revenge." After the composer completed his musical score, Miss Graham altered its title and story — calling the work Dark Meadow. Like so much that Miss Graham does, one often feels that her choreography is strangely at cross purposes with its musical score, and this seemed the case to me when I saw Dark Meadow. I scarcely realized the worth of Chavez's music and feel that the composer was justified in making a symphony orchestra arrangement of his music independent of the choreography.

There is a classical stringency to this score, though there are aspects of the music which suggest a primitive urge that is inherent to the composer. There is a quiet beauty and melodic eloquence to this work which may be deceptive at first, for there is neither an obvious emotional urge or drama in it. The performance must be accepted as authoritative. Decca engineers have handled their assignment competently. —P.H.R.

DE FALLA: Dances from The Three-Cornered Hat; PALAU: March Burlesque; Hommage à Debussy; RODRIGO: Hommenaje a la Temperancia; ITURBI: Seguidillas; CHAVARRI: Interior from Valenciannos; Valencia Symphony Orchestra conduced by José Iturbi. RCA Victor LP disc LM-1138, \$5.72.

▲THE VALENCIA SYMPHONY is Iturbi's own baby, founded by him a few years ago

in the town of his birth and fostered by his energy and good will into a creditable, closely knit musical organization. Last year Iturbi took the group on a tour of England and Scotland, and this disc was made between concerts in England.

With the exception of de Falla, whose father was of Valencian origin, all the composers listed above are natives of Valencia. Stylistically they follow the well-trodden paths of Spanish composition, leaning heavily on traditional rhythms and colorations, the shallow gaiety leavened by an ever-present undercurrent of quasi-mystical sadness. Nothing too dolorous, however, to prevent placing this disc in the summer "Pops" category.

Chavarri's piece is the best of the unfamiliar ones. It has a genuine depth of feeling, native honesty and unpretentious dignity. Chavarri, now in his seventies, was Iturbi's original patron, helping to raise the money to send the boy pianist to Paris for advanced study. Falla's powerful ballet music needs no comment.

From the evidence assembled here, none of these Valencian composers rank with Breton, Turina or de Falla. One finds much that is agreeable, however, turned out in warmly sympathetic performances, beautifully recorded. It is rather heart-warming that one world-famous artist has not forgotten the old folks at home.

—A.W.P.

DVORAK: Symphony No. 2 in D minor, Op. 70; Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Ernst Schrader. Urania LP disc 7015, \$5.95.

DVORAK: Six Legends, Op. 59, Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 7 and 8; The Wood Dove, Op. 110 (Symphonic Poem); Symphony Orchestra of Radio Berlin conducted by Fritz Lehmann. Urania LP disc 7010, \$5.95.

▲DVORAK'S D minor Symphony is one of his greatest works, lofty in spirit and powerful in scope. Tovey compares it favorably to the big C major Symphony of Schubert and the four symphonies of Brahms (viz. Essays in Musical Analysis, Vol. II). Unmistakably, the influence of Brahms, who was both counsellor and friend to Dvorak at this time (1884-85), is apparent in Dvorak's mental approach and to some extent in his invention. This is especially true in the stormy and austere opening movement. Dvorak, the nationalist, does not emerge in this work

until the finale where he fails to reach the heights of the other three movements. Both the slow movement and the scherzo remain two of the best movements of their kind he wrote.

Talich and the Czech Philharmonic gave us a wonderful performance of this opus prior to the war (Victor set 663). Schrader's performance is more stolid, less fluent and refined; but it is properly energetic and cognizant of the dramatic intensity of the composer's intentions. It lacks the poetic feeling which Talich brought to the more romantic pages; moreover the dynamics are on the loud side, which may be due to too much monitoring by the recording engineer. The reproduction is not always as clear as most of the Berlin Philharmonic recordings have been - possibly this performance was taken from a broadcast. Nonetheless, this is a welcome addition to the growing LP symphonic catalogue.

Dvorak's ten Legends were originally for four-hand piano playing. Later, the composer orchestrated a group. They are diverting pieces on the whole, though only two of the six recorded - Nos. 3 and 8 - are really inspired compositions. Beecham once recorded No. 3 (Columbia set X-55). Beecham has also recorded one of Dvorak's symphonic poems, The Golden Spinning Wheel, which because of an absurd program proves less endurable and persuasive than his Wood Dore. Both these works are based on nationalistic ballads by the poet K. J. Erben, but the latter has a far less difficult program to follow. The dove is a rather innocuous symbol of justice, who causes a poison-mixing widow to kill herself in the end. Curiously, this is music that one can listen to apart from its intended program and, under such circumstances, proves more substantial fare. Lehmann'is no Beecham, but he is a forthright conductor with a gift for a lifting lilt which is a commendatory quality in Dvorak's music. The bright, clean orchestral sound is well reproduced with an enlivening resonance not always found in recordings of radio ensembles.

FAMOUS OVERTURES, No. 2: Alceste (Gluck), Il Matrimonio secreto (Cimarosa), Iphigenia aus Aulis (Gluck), Gli Orazi ei Curiazi (Cimarosa); The London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Royalton Kisch. London 10" LP disc LPS 353, \$4.95.

▲THESE four classical overtures make a good program — Gluck's dramatic eloquence matched against the melodic light-heartedness of Cimorosa. The inclusion of an unknown overture by the Italian proves a welcome selection. Kisch's performances are well planned with heedful observance of de-His is honest, careful musicianship without the personal convictions we find in the Furtwängler reading of the Alceste overture. The conductor uses Wagner's version of the Iphigenia overture (not noted on the label) in which the noted composer sums up its four subjects in an impressive manner. The recording is excellent, generally clean and clear, though there are some passages in the Gluck overtures that might have been better balanced.

HANDEL (arr. Fekete): The Triumph of Time and Truth — Suile; Orchestral Society of Vienna with Double Wind Choir conducted by Zoltan Fekete. Period LP disc SPLP 525, \$5.95.

▲FEKETE, like Sir Thomas Beecham, is fascinated with the music of Handel and has sought out and arranged several suites that have been widely praised from the composer's oratorios. The quote in the notes from the Handel authority, Hugo Leichentritt, is worthy of consideration, for Fekete displays considerable intuition in his modern orchestral realization of Handel's music.

The Triumph of Time and Truth (Il Trionfo del Tempo e della Verita) is an oratorio that the composer worked over several times during his life. With four characters - Beauty, Pleasure, Time, and Truth — its text treats "of the temptations of the two former and their subordination by the two latter." First presented in Italian in 1708, it was revised two years before the composer's death (1757) for his last major oratorio in English. Handel endeavoring to "portray the anguish of the mortal soul on its road to its final salvation and reward," as the annotator contends? Some may wonder. However, the dramatic import of the opening section suggests the seriousness of the composer's thought and purpose, and the two slow movements --one a solacing Larghetto and the other a gentle Pastorale - have quiet beauty and dignity. The finale though serious minded,

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me pro Str nov Sla affi is typical Handelian pomp. The notes give us no clue of the music's relation to Handel's original score.

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Mr. Fekete's performance is thoughtful, musicianly, and generally well planned; but not as communicative as Beecham's Handel. The orchestra is not exactly what would be termed a smooth ensemble, but it plays well enough for one to enjoy this music which is firstrate Handel. The reproduction is satisfactory.

—P.H.R.

HAYDN: Symphony No. 101 in D major (The Clock); Munich Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Georg Reinwald. Mercury 10" LP disc MG 15018, \$3.85. ▲CONSIDERING that Toscanini, Ansermet, and Ormandy have all given recent performances of this familiar symphony by Haydn far better played and recorded, there seems little justification for the release of this record. The slow movement of "The Clock," which provides the sobriquet of the work, seems to be something of a test for conductors. Reinwald inclines to be pompous in this delicately happy music, which makes for un-

JANACEK: Taras Bulba (Rhapsody for Orchestra); Vienna Symphony Orchestra conducted by Henry Swoboda, Suite for String Orchestra; Winterthur Symphony Orchestra conducted by Henry Swoboda. Westminster LP disc WL5071, \$5.95.

--- D.R.

necessary solemnity.

▲LEOS JANACEK (1854-1928) is the most important Czech composer since Smetana. That he is just coming into his own outside of his country is ironic. In England, critics are justly praising his Jenufa, a realistic drama of village life that seems to have missed fire when given at the Metropolitan Opera with Jeritza in 1924-25. A revival today might prove more auspicious. While Janacek, like Smetana and Dvorak, was influenced by folk melodies, especially of his native Moravia, he cannot be termed a completely nationalist composer. Literary subjects interested him, but his treatment of these is by no means merely descriptive. Rather he seems to probe the depths of human drama as in his String Quartet No. 1 — inspired by Tolstoi's novel, The Kreutzer Sonata - and in his Slavonic rhapsody Taras Bulba. Janacek's affinity with Russian life and literature has produced some powerful and strongly emotional music. His rhapsody is based on exploits of the hero of Gogol's tale of Cossack warriors in the 15th century. It is in three movements portraying the deaths of Taras' two sons and of himself. The subject suggests romantic treatment, but Janacek is no follower of the tribe of Liszt and his imitators. He plumbs the depths of human feeling in his heroic rhapsody, creating the essence of the situation rather than its programmatic realism., Since becoming acquainted with this work in a performance by Bakala and the Symphonic Orchestra of Radio Brno on Czech Supraphone discs, I have found it a deeply moving and almost fearful experience. Swoboda is not quite the best interpretor for this music; he lacks a true psychological feeling for climax. His performance is generally well ordered however and, as it is splendidly recorded, will serve to acquaint many with a composer well worth knowing.

Taras Bulba was written in 1918, while the String Suite dates from 1877. The latter shows in part the influences of Smetana and Dvorak, but the spirit of the music is nonetheless one of individual feeling. It is evident that Janacek at 23 was a musician of solid attainments, who knew how to write gratefully for a string orchestra. There is both thoughtfulness of purpose in this music and poetic feeling. Of its kind, it is a work that should wear well. Swoboda handles this score on the whole very well and the recording is generally clear and clean.

—P.H.R.

KODALY: Psalmus Hungaricus; Symphony Orchestra and Chorus of Radio Berlin conducted by Arthur Rother with Helmut Krebs (tenor). Dances from Galanla; Symphony Orchestra of Radio Berlin conducted by L. G. Jochum. Urania LP disc URLP-7014, \$5.95. KODALY: Hary Janos Suite; Bavarian State Orchestra conducted by Georg Solti. Dances from Galanta; Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Victor Decca LP disc DL-9518, de Sabata. \$5.85.

▲ABOUT A YEAR AGO we got from Antal Dorati and his Dallas forces a good performance marred by poor recording of Kodaly's occasionally impressive *Psalmus Hungaricus*. This version (RCA Victor 45 rpm set WDM-1331) used the original Hungarian

text. The German, performance sponsored by Urania, is not so good as the earlier rendition; and the recording, though the best yet, still leaves a good deal to be desired. The use of a German text (the present notes, by the way, give it and an English translation), the often inappropriate operatic style of Krebs, and insufficient fervor on the part of conductor Rother are elements that will not be part of a completely satisfactory version of this music.

Deutsche Grammophon's fine wartime recording of de Sabata's excellent performance of the lovely Galanta Dances has been transferred to LP by Decca with middling success. Bass now needs boosting and surfaces are noisy. In spite of better recording by Urania, the de Sabata version is nevertheless preferable to the stolid discourse offered by Jochum.

Mostly admirable are the Bavarian State Orchestra's smooth playing of the delightful Hary Janos Suile and Solti's thoughtful conception of the work. Unusually poor surfaces and the lack of the merriment and tonal glitter appropriate to this music, however, still makes Ormandy's high-spirited interpretation (Columbia disc ML-4306) the one to acquire.

—C.J.L.

LUIGINI: Ballet Egyptian; City of Birmingham Orchestra conducted by George Weldon; COLERIDGE-TAYLOR: Petile Suite de Concert; Queen's Hall Light Orchestra conducted by Sidney Torch. Columbia 10" LP disc ML 2180, \$4.00. ▲I'M TOLD that Luigini's suite was used constantly in the days of the early movies as accompaniments for oriental scenes - even the comics. Fiedler's recent recording of this work steals an edge on this one; the Boston Pops is the better orchestra. Coleridge-Taylor (1875-1912) of African Negro descent was a gifted composer of light music. His suite derives from French salon music and its four movements are reminiscent in a way of similar sentimental pieces by Chaminade. The performance and recording are satisfactory. -P.G.

MOZART: Divertimento in D for Strings, K.136; Serenade in G — Eine kleine Nachtmusik, K.525; Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra conducted by Karl Munchinger. London 10" LP disc LPS-385, \$4.95.

▲A RELATIVELY unfamiliar piece such

as this Divertimento does not suffer as much from the precise, scholastic handling of Munchinger as the overly-familiar Serenade, which requires considerably more flexibility than the stiffly starched Munchinger musters. The Divertimento is a fine little piece. Cobbett, in his odd British fashion, insists on calling it Mozart's Second String Quartet. Actually, the piece is more in the style of an Italian Overture without wind instruments. I know of no completely satisfactory "Eine kleine" on LP; I've always had a soft spot for the Bruno Walter set (Victor set 364). —A.W.P.

MOZART: Divertimento No. 7 in D, K.205 and Cassation in B flat, K.99; Salzburg Mozarteum Orchestra conducted by Paul Walter. Period LP disc SPLP-528, \$5.95.

▲JUDGING from Paul Walter's nerveless conducting of the Divertimento No. 7, one might come to the conclusion that this music is an uneventful, work-a-day product of the youthful Mozart. Since the work is new to records and to your reviewer, this is merely a suspicious conjecture. One thing, however, is certain; Walter does nothing to make the work appear interesting. Noisy surfaces, mediocre studio recording, and instrumental playing that is lacking in refinement do not make matters any better.

That is about the story on the other side of this disc, except that there can be no doubt that the somewhat uneven Cassation, K.99 contains many levely moments. Good surfaces this time.

—C.J.L.

MOZART: Symphony No. 28 in C, K.200; and Symphony No. 34 in C, K.338; L'-Orchestre de la Suisse Romande conducted by Peter Maag. London LP disc LLP-389, \$5.95.

▲PETER MAAG'S WORK was introduced to record listeners just a couple of months ago. He gave us at that time a most lovely performance of Mozart's delightful Symphony No. 29 (London LLP-286). Now we have him reading with grace and strength two more Mozart symphonies.

The Symphony No. 28 is a work of little importance, of little originality, and of no little monotony. But even here, in one of the least of Mozart's longer works, there is that unique tonal glow that is incandescence itself.

This is Symphony treatment faithful to values. Unmbia seing of bo Bright, cito Moza Maag.

MOZAR' K.385; Turin jan; Radio Eugen \$5.85. Sympl ert He Munic ducted disc M **▲BOTH** kleine No Jochum e pays cons Heger us seems m moving a performa tions of and fam Heger is music, ar exception a scholar not peda

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This is the first time for the charming Symphony No. 34 on LP. Though Maag's treatment lacks the necessary gaiety, it is faithful to the remainder of the score's many values. Only Beecham's performance (Columbia set 548) is better. London's recording of both works is absolutely top notch. Bright, clean, and spacious, it does justice to Mozart and to up-and-coming Peter Maag.

—C.J.L.

MOZART: Symphony No. 35 in D major, K.385; Italian Radio Orchestra of Turin conducted by Herbert von Karajan; Serenade in G, K.525; Bavarian Radio Chamber Orchestra conducted by Eugen Joehum; Decca LP disk DL 9513, \$5.85. Serenade in G, K.525; Bamberg Symphony Orchestra conducted by Robert Heger. WAGNER: Siegfried Idyll; Munich Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Rudolf Albert. Mercury LP disc MG 10015, \$4.85.

▲BOTH of these recordings of the Eine kleine Nachtmusik have their merits. Eugen Jochum employs a very small orchestra and pays considerable attention to detail. Robert Heger uses a very large string orchestra and seems more concerned with keeping things moving along at a fast clip. To be sure his performance encompasses the subtle intuitions of Jochum's, but perhaps this beloved and familiar serenade doesn't need them. Heger is known for his performances of dance music, and the Mozart, among other things, is a scholar and, while his Mozart is certainly not pedantic, it is more staid.

Von Karajan's Hoffner is quite unique. His control over the orchestra is, as always, complete and this makes for a razor sharp interpretation. It also makes for an iciness of result and a cold vigor which admirers of, say, the Beecham version, might not care for. His conception definitely deserves to be heard, however, if only because he is the only conductor other than Toscanini — that I know of — to take the final presto at Mozart's indication — as fast as possible. It's quite a performance.

Albert's Wagner is a rather sleepy affair as compared with either the Rodzinski or the Weingartner, but it has the merits of beautiful orchestral playing and a not too rigid control which allows this somewhat meandering score to meander too much as it pleases.

The Decca recording is much the better of these two discs. It was dubbed from Deutsche Grammophon, and very successfully too. The Mercury has both harsh highs and a general grittiness of surfaces. —D.R.

NYSTROEM: Sinfonia del Mare; Ingrid Eksell (soprano) and the Swedish State Symphony Orchestra conducted by Tor Mann. Dial LP disc 11, \$5.95.

▲SWEDEN, a land usually associated with matches and neutrality, has not made much of a name for herself in the field of music. Hugo Alfven (b. 1872), a sort of Swedish Grieg, is best known here for his over-long rhapsody, *Midsummer Vigil* (Victor set M-788, withdrawn). Aside from a few pieces by Stenhammar (b. 1871), the only other Swedish composer to attain any representation on records in this country is Kurt Atterberg, whose C major Symphony, Op. 31, was awarded in 1928 the \$10,000 prize offered by the Columbia Graphophone Company for a work conceived as "an apotheosis to the lyrical genius of Schubert."

It is very doubtful that this new selection by Gosta Nystroem will add to the reputation of Swedish music here. Solidly constructed of well-seasoned materials, the Sinfonia del Mare contains echos of the twelve years Nystroem spent in Paris around the early twenties. The middle section of this work, however, is more aptly described as Hollywood modern, in the best traditions of Steiner, Newman, and Waxman. It includes a part for soprano solo sung in English in a quavery fashion by a Miss Eksell of the Stockholm Opera. Indifferent orchestral playing is adequately recorded.

—A.W.P.

RAVEL: Ma Mère L'Oye; DEBUSSY: La Mer; L'Orchestre de la Suisse Romande conducted by Ernest Ansermet. London LP disc LLP-338, \$5.95.

AN EXCELLENT RECORDING from London provides us with two more examples of Ernest Ansermet's distinguished way with impressionistic music. First, there is a complete account of the ever enchanting Mother Goose Suite (including the seldom heard opening section — Prélude et Danse du Rouet) that is clearly superior to any other you've ever heard come out of a speaker. An especial care for meter to assure a dreamlike continuity and skillful handling of the problems which

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have to do with tonal blending and balancing are among Ansermet's extraordinary accomplishments in conducting this music.

Though the new La Mer is the best we have ever had on records, it is not, for your reviewer, entirely successful. Ansermet's reading is virtually letter perfect and the Suisse Romande's playing is acceptable at the very least. There is not, indeed, any glaring musical indiscretion that shows itself right off. What seems to be lacking is the necessary cumulative tension and solid enough tonal impact in some of the climactic passages.

—C.J.L.

SCHUMANN: Symphony No. 1 in B flat, Op. 38; L'Orchestre de la Suisse Romande conducted by Ernest Ansermet. London LP disc LLP 391, \$5.95.

▲RECENTLY, we had two Schumann symphonies - Nos. 1 and 4 - on one LP disc performed by Keiberth and the German Philharmonic Orchestra of Prague. Keiberth accomplished this by not observing all the repeats in the works, and perhaps by closer record lines. There are some who find the repeats in Schumann's symphonies unendurable, particularly in the First Symphony, notably those in the first movement and the scherzo. Ansermet faithfully observes these repeats. As a recording, this one is far above the Keiberth and the Leinsdorf versions. As a performance, it is distinguished by its delicate detail and its buoyant spirit. Ansermet actually makes the opening movement sound like Mendelssohn, no mean achievement considering Schumann's type of orchestration. Keiberth has stronger convictions on the romantic characteristics of Schumann's music, but no one will deny that Ansermet shapes the tender Larghelto with expressively detailed care. By far the best version of the symphony on records because of finer orchestral playing and clearer and brighter record-

MEET THE COMPOSER — Stravinsky: Fireworks, Op. 4; Ode; Norweigian Moods; Circus Polka; Philharmonic Orchestra of New York conducted by Igor Stravinksy; Ebony Concerto; Woody Herman Orchestra conducted by Stravinsky; Russian Maiden's Song; Joseph Szigeti (violin) with Stravinsky at the piano. Columbia LP disc ML 4398, \$5.45.

▲MOST of these selections are reissues on

LP. Fireworks is an early work and a clever piece of picturesque music. Norwegian Moods has been called a meager opus for a major There is a certain symphony orchestra. fascination to Stravinsky's tone coloring and rhythms of American dance music in his Ebony Concerto. The violin and piano piece is a transcription of a soprano aria from the composer's opera, Marra (available on a Dial LP). Ode and Circus Polka are new to records. The first, "a chant in three parts for orchestra," is dedicated to the memory of Kousse vitzky's first wife, Natalie. This is one of Stravinsky's more moving later works, fascinatingly scored. Circus Polka is a satire a ballet for elephants and ballerinas - which is also meager fare for a symphony orchestra. Columbia's engineers have done an excellent job in transferring these works to LP. -J.N.

STRAUSS, Johann: Die Fledermaus — Overture; RCA Victor Orchestra conducted by Fritz Reiner. RCA Victor 45 rpm disc 49-3296, \$1.10.

▲REINER'S treatment of this familiar overture is sometimes overtaut — quite a virtuoso performance. I suspect some will want it on a separate 45 disc, but to many of us the break is not pleasant. Fine recording. —J.N.

TCHAIKOVSKY: Serenade for Strings, Op. 48; NWDR Symphony Orchestra, Hamburg, conducted by Hans Schmidt-Isserstedt. Decca LP disc DL 9517, \$5.85.

▲OF the three other versions of this work on LP discs, the Koussevitzky was the best recorded. Schmidt-Isserstedt's performance steals an edge, however, on the latter, not only for some of the most beautiful string orchestra playing on records but for the conductor's more personally persuasive treatment of the score.

—J.N.

TCHAIKOVSKY: Symphony No. 5 in E minor, Op. 64; Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Eugene Ormandy. Columbia LP disc ML-4400, \$5.45. Also by Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Ferenc Fricsay. Decca LP disc DL-9519, \$5.85.

▲THESE performances by two distinguished Hungarian-born conductors have many merits to recommend them to listeners. Recording honors are about even. To be sure, the reproduction characteristics differ as Decca's

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requires considerable heightening of the bass for satisfactory balance. There is admirable unanimity of playing from both orchestras, and brilliance as well as beauty of sound. The balancing of timbres varies, though both men are adept at this; but Fricsay is more mindful of clarity of instrumentation and does not permit his strings to blanket his woodwinds at any time. The Ormandy reading is solid, straightforward, carefully worked out but with little personal compunction. It is distinguished for its rich sounding string body and some wonderful solo wind playing, notably in the second movement. Fricsay lets more light and air into the music, reveals a personal feeling for melodic nuancing that impresses. Neither conductor favors the energetic drive of Kletzki or Mengelberg yet neither denies the spirited vigor of the score. Both are more vital than Koussevitzky in his last performance, and far more honest to the composer's markings than Celibidache. Both recordings could have profited with less monitoring in the loud passages.

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VIVALDI: The Four Seasons (Concerti delle Stagione, Nos. 1 to 4 from Il Cimento dell' armonia e dell'invenzione, Op. 8); The Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra with Reinhold Barchet (violin) conducted by Karl Munchinger, London LP disc LLP 386, \$5.95.

▲THIS is the third version of Vivaldi's nature tonal paintings, and from a standpoint of musical presentation is probably the most authentic version. It is rather surprising to have this performance from Russian occupied Germany substantiating a musical erudition that one thought had disappeared with Hitler. Munchinger's performance has a precision and straightforwardness more in keeping with the composer's music than either of the other versions. While one admires the manner in which this conductor avoids excess sentiment in the slow sections, one finds his rhythms in the fast sections a little stiff and sometimes tending to too much bounce.

Cetra's version of these concertos was played in the Molinari arrangement which tended to identify the classical-minded Vivaldi with the romantic era — the slow sections became almost saccharine in sentiment. Concert Hall's version, which aimed to duplicate an authentic performance, featured the solo violin of Louis Kaufman in a manner that



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upset the balance of the ensemble - something that was not done in Vivaldi's time. Barchet's violin is properly balanced with the ensemble but his delicate playing is not as expressive as Kaufman's. Vivaldi's Seasons, while exhibiting many manifestations of the composer's best qualities, is hardly in a class with the other eight concertos of Opus 8; these latter are more "beautiful and enduringly entertaining music." Too, they are well played by Kaufman, and recorded under ideal circumstances (Concert Hall LP set 1064). The Seasons hardly offer an exciting year for the changes of nature are rather naively depicted. Perhaps the best way to enjoy them is to program one at a time. As a recording, London's version is far ahead of the other two. -P.H.R.

Concerto

BACH, K.P.E.: Concerto for Flute in G major; MOZART, Leopold: Concerto for Trumpet in D major; Aurele Nicolet (flute) and Marcel Frei (trumpet) with the Winterthur Symphony Orchestra conducted by Clemens Dahinden. Concert Hall LP disc 1077, \$5.95.

▲INTEREST in the music of Philipp Emanuel, the most original of Bach's sons, has been one of the most rewarding developments since the advent of LP. Nicolet plays this composer's deftly written flute concerto with admirable virtuosity. Despite suggestions of the style of Haydn and Mozart, this music reveals its composer's strong individuality. Little of the music of Mozart's domineering father is known today and his trumpet concerto is only the second work to reach records. An attractive little opus, performed with bright, flawless clarity by Frei, it may well prove a discoverer's delight. Dahinden's accompaniments are well integrated with solo instruments and musically in good taste. Excellent recordings — no surface noise.

MOZART: Concertos No. 17 in G major (K.453) and No. 19 in F major (K.459); Leonard Hambro (piano) with the Oklahoma City Symphony Orchestra conducted by Victor Allesandro. Allegro LP disc 3011, \$5.95.

▲HAMBRO has less competition from Gaby

Casadesus in her Vox LP of the G major Concerto than he has from Clara Haskil in her Westminster LP of the F major. does not feel the dotted rhythms of the opening phrases in the F major in comparable manner to the conductor whose rhythm might also have better been substantiated. While Hambro's clean technique and often expressive feeling are to be admired, his playing is somewhat reserved. This may be due to the fact that Alessandro's accompaniments are freer in spirit and sometimes less well ordered. The original Mozart cadenzas are used. The recording is equally as fine as Allegro's recent The Martyrdom of St. Sebastian. -J.G.R.

PROKOFIEFF: Concerto for Piano and Orchestra No. 5 in G major, Op. 55; Alfred Brendel with the Vienna State Orchestra conducted by Jonathan Sternberg; Piano Sonata No. 5 in C major, Op. 38; Piano Pieces, Op. 12, Nos. 6, 7 and 9; Hans Graf. Period LP disc SPLP 527, 85.95.

▲THE FIFTH PIANO CONCERTO, written in 1932 at the very end of Prokofieff's "Paris period," is - like other piano works of this period - seldom heard. One would have to go back two years to the first quartet, or forward to Lieutenant Kije, to find anything familiar. In the five movement concerto Prokofieff again began the pianistic experimentations dropped after the fifth sonata of 1925. Nestyev says of it: "The tendency to wide skips à la Scarlatti is carried to monstrous extremes; sheer feats of piano acrobatics completely dominate the principal movements of the concerto." This is particularly noticeable in the mechanistic toccata which sounds very much like the trip-hammer music of Pas d'Acier. In fact, the whole work rather resembles that disappointing 1925 ballet score. Prokofieff makes little use of his great lyric gifts and the dynamic qualities of the opening movements soon degenerate into mere strident movement. In addition, although the performance sounds accurate enough, the recording is not very good; it is tonally often badly muddled.

The sonata finds us back on more familiar ground: its lovely opening movement is Prokofieff at his best with unexpected modulations and intensely lyric, melodic line. As the work progresses, however, one feels the composer is striving for something new which

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makes it seem often "rather detached in spirit." The Prelude from the nine little piano pieces has been popular for a long time as a harp solo, but the others are less known, though no less charming. Hans Graf performs both these and the sonata with a very sharp yet not too dry tone, which has been well recorded.

—D.R.

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Guide

RACHMANINOFF: Piano Concerto No. 2 in C minor, Op. 18; Julius Katchen (piano) and the New Symphony Orchestra conducted by Anatole Fistoulari. London LP disc LLP-384, \$5.95.

▲IT WAS bound to come, and here it is — a Rachmaninoff C minor that could serve as the sound track for a weepy, sentimental film. All stops are out. Katchen sighs and Fistoulari sighs with him. Katchen indulges in all sorts of fancy dynamic tomfoolery, and Fistoulari is in there plugging. As far as the notes themselves go, Katchen is pretty efficient. Like all young present-day virtuosos he has the fingers to take care of the problems; but it takes much more stringent musicianship than he possesses to make a serious piece of music out of this concerto.

Of previously recorded versions, the original Rachmaninoff was naturally tops, and it also is available on LP. Recent recordings of the concerto have not been too successful; the best of a none too exhilarating lot would be the Rubinstein-Golschmann collaboration for Victor.

—H.C.S.

WEBER: Clarinet Concerto No. 1 in F minor, Op. 73; Clarinet Concerto No. 2 in E flat major, Op. 74; Alois Heine (clarinet) and the Salzburg Mozarteum Orchestra conducted by Paul Walter. Period LP disc SPLP-529, \$5.95.

▲THESE are first domestic recordings. As music they do not have too much to recommend them; as vehicles for the instrument they are skillfully contrived and gratefully constructed by a composer who knew his clarinet. Do not, however, expect either the elegance of the Clarinet Quintet, Op. 34 (Vox LP disc PL-6140) or the frothiness of the Concertino, Op. 26 (Columbia 69869-D).

One might well overlook the weakness of these scores if Herr Heine had more solo authority. In addition to a colorless personality he favors a raw, open tone that increases in nasal quality as it ascends. If you think I am unduly fussy, compare this player with Buerkner, soloist in the above-listed quintet, or Augustin Duques in the Mozart quintet (Stradivari LP disc STR-601). The latter are solo players who never let you forget that they are in charge of the proceedings.

Part of Heine's difficulties may be laid to faulty microphone placement, a tricky business in the recording of solo winds. Sometimes it is even possible to hear the mechanism of his instrument. The recording is very uneven; for best results one would have to adjust the controls from time to time during the playing.

—A.W.P.

Chamber Music

BACH: The Musical Offering; nine soloists conducted by Hermann Scherchen. Westminster LP disc WL-5070, \$5.95.

▲AT LAST we have a complete recording on LP of Bach's fascinating Musical Offering. Hermann Scherchen, who directs this excellent performance, uses the Vuataz version. Like the Art of Fugue, this music has no notations of scoring and very few in matters pertaining to tempo, phrasing, etc. It is one of the works that grew out of Bach's setting himself a complex technical problem. In this case it is (as the annotator has so aptly stated) an attempt "to wring every possible canonic imitation from a given theme, in such a manner that the theme appears different each time in its harmonic content."

The theme was given to Bach by Frederick the Great in 1747. Bach's enormous interest in the theme and its possibilities for elaboration resulted in the three-part ricercare, the ten canons, the lovely Trio Sonata, and the ever astonishing six-part ricercare — the parts that make up Bach's "Musical Offering" to King Frederick.

The nine soloists who participate in this recording — a string quartet, a cembalo, a flute, an oboe, an English horn, and a bassoon — play very well and Westminster's engineers have caught their sounds with unusual fidelity. Quiet surfaces. —C.J.L.

BACH: Partita No. 2 in D minor (unaccompanied violin); Alfredo Campoli; BRUCH; Concerto No. 1 in G minor, Op. 26; Campoli and The New Symphony Orchestra conducted by Royalton Kisch. London LP disc LLP 395, \$5.95.

▲SELDOM does one hear the unaccompanied D minor Partita played with the tonal sonority that can be found in this performance by Campoli. Moreover, one rarely hears such rhythmic flexibility imparted to the dance movements and such nobility and sustained power in the Chaconne. This is some of the most satisfying playing of an unaccompanied violin work by Bach since the early recordings made by Szigeti.

The Bruch concerto is a strange bedfellow for the D minor Partita. I suppose the premise of two Bs can be cited by the sponsors, but if ever two Bs of this kind got in the same hive there would be quite a conflict. Campoli brings opulent tone and technical surety to his performance of this popular work — a work that in spite of its vitality, melodic beauty, and youthful freshness is often needlessly disparaged. It is gratefully written for the soloist and falls gratefully on the ears of those who admire sweetness and verve. Kisch is the ever cautious conductor in this performance; he never tries to steal the show as some others do. The recording is very realistic in both works with an admirable balance between soloist and orchestra in the concerto.

BARTOK: Rhapsody No. 1; KODALY: Sonala for cello and piano, Op. 4; WEINER: Lakodalmas; Janos Starker (cello) and Otto Herz (piano). Program LP disc EXLP-702, \$5.95.

▲DEDICATED to Joseph Szigeti. Bartok's Rhapsody No. 1 (1928) is usually known as a violinist's showpiece. Here, however, we get this charming work in a cello transcription made by the composer himself and beautifully played by the very talented Janos Starker. There are also excellent performances of Weiner's charming Lakodalmas (an ancient Hungarian wedding dance) and Kodaly's early and somewhat immature Sonata, Op. 4, a two-movement work consisting of a loose rhapsody (Fanlasie) and an assortment of Hungarian dance tunes. —C.J.L.

BEETHOVEN: Sonata for Horn and Piano in F, Op. 17; Davis Shuman (trombone) and Sam Raphling (piano); BEETHOVEN: Three Aequali for Four Trombones; Farewell, thou Golden Sun; UNKNOWN: Marching Song; ABT: On the Mountains; GLUCK: Quietly, from thy Heavens; ZOLLNER: Wandering; TRADITIONAL:

Klagenfurlnet Bells; Shuman Brass Choir conducted by Davis Shuman. Renaissance LP disc X-31, \$5.95.

▲THIS RECORD is a hopeless botch from original conception to program notes. The first number is labeled "Sonata for Trombone and Piano as transposed from the Sonata for Horn and Piano," which is scarcely a true statement. What really happens here is this: Beethoven wrote a Sonata for Horn and Piano, which on this disc is played, with the exception of a couple of low Cs, as written (not transposed) by, of all people, a trombonist. That is a wrong thing to do.

The anonymous annotator says, "The transposition for trombone here presented reproduces the valveless sound for which Beethoven intended this music." This is not true. To reproduce the valveless sound that Beethoven intended Shuman would have had to play the whole piece in the sixth position, which would have meant ascending to the eleventh harmonic on occasion — a herculean if not impossible feat. There are other discrepancies not worth the necessary space to clear up.

The three Aequali, which were played at Beethoven's funeral, are suitably dreary. The rest of the program is trashy stuff in its present setting — fun enough, no doubt, for the players, but why on earth should any one besides the players' relatives be expected to listen to it? With the exception of the featured soloist the playing is quite good. Shuman's tone quality is uniformly unpleasant, his musicianship often in doubtful taste, especially in the selection of utterly flabby tempi in the sonata. —A.W.P.

BRAHMS: Sonata in D minor, Op. 108; Jascha Heifetz (violin) and William Kapell (piano). RCA Victor 10" LP disc LM 71, \$4.67.

▲THERE ARE TWO other performances of this sonata on LP discs — Elman and Rosé (Victor — LM 30) and Stern and Zakin (Columbia — ML- 54363). Both are preferrable to this version. Brahms' violin sonatas, like Beethoven's, are planned for true co-partnership between the participants. This is not attained in this recording where Kapell is relegated to the background and Heifetz exploited to the complete disadvantage of the musical intentions of the composer.

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The best performance of this strongly textured work was by Szigeti and Petri - no other has the true co-partnership which leaves the listener so satisfied with each artist. The Stern-Zakin version has its merits; both artists are sensitive to the finer points of the music, and both achieve emotional passion where needed without undue sentiment. Elman tends to be more sentimental, but he is nearer to the heart of Brahms than Heifetz. For all Heifetz' fine violin playing, he does not have the personal convictions of his predecessors, and why he allowed the recording to be issued with a balance featuring the violin with only a feeble piano part is not understandable, much less condonable.

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BRAHMS: Trio in A Major, Opus Posthumous; William Heubner (violin), Richard Harand (cello) and Franz Holletschek (piano). Westminster LP disc WL 5058, \$5.95.

▲WHEN this work was first discovered in 1924, there was considerable doubt as to the composer: but through the years so many scholarly minds have attributed it to Brahms that there seems no longer any question. This trio probably belongs to the very youthful writings of the composer which somehow escaped the destruction to which he subjegated so many of his early works. The history of the trio is fully given in the very complete program notes accompanying the disc.

It might be expected that so early a work would be somewhat clumsy. It was not the sometime awkwardness that impressed me, however, so much as the occasional facility of writing which seemed highly, almost embarrassingly, reminiscent of trio dinner-music. All four movements seem devoid of any pressing thought, but they are so beautifully presented that instead of the mutterings of a youthful giant I heard an excessively fluent rendering of melodies that suggest callow youth. This means that the music is very pleasant but it also means that, for content, it goes at the bottom of Brahms impressive list of chamber works.

The performance could scarcely be bettered. It's a lush work and is given the full treatment. In addition, the recording is fine.

COUPERIN: Concerts Royaux (complete); Phillip Kaplan (flute); Samuel Mayes (cello); and Erwin Bodky (harpsichord). Allegro LP disc, ALG 3013, \$5.95.

▲THE FOUR "royal concerts," which date from after 1714, were written to "soften and sweeten the King's melancholy," as the composer tells us. They are actually little dance suites, the form being adapted from the ballet and the theatre. Musically they are representative of the best of Couperin. There is some question as to the advisability of a performance using the combination of flute, cello, and harpsichord, even though no particular medium is specified for the pieces. They were printed on two staves as though for clavecin but the melodic lines clearly call for four separate instruments with a clavecin continuo. This, the composer says in his preface to the score, was what he had in mind and they were actually first heard as performed by violin, viola, oboe, and bassoon with the composer at the clavecin.

This instrumentation would seem more fair to the music than the trio arrangement heard here; but it, in turn, is fairer than the two previous recordings. Sachs used too few instruments and Desormiére too many. There is certainly nothing the matter with the

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performers. They work together in perfect accord and, separately, display complete control and considerable insight. The recording is quite adequate though some fault might be found in the band placement. The first and fourth suites are on one side and the second and third on the other. As Couperin tells us that he had arranged all four, par tons, beginning in G and proceeding up the cycle of fifths to the key of the dominant — to D, A, and E — some of the structural beauties of the work have been obscured. —D.R.

DVORAK: Quartet No. 3 in E flat major, Op. 51; Boskovsky Quartet (Willi Boskovsky, 1st violin; Philipp Matheis, 2nd violin; Guenther Breitenbach, viola; Nicolaus Huebner, cello). London LP disc LLP 387, \$5.95.

▲IN JULY 1939, Columbia issued this spontaneously ingratiating chamber opus of Dvorak performed by the Lener Quartet. Two years later, Victor brought forth a rendition by the Busch Quartet. all counts the polished performance of the Lener won out, except for that group's missing the bubbling humor of the finale which is based on a Czech dance, the Skocna. The Busch ensemble were heavy-handed in this light-hearted music. The present quartet, unknown to me, (though I suspect a Viennese group because a couple of the players have been identified with organizations in that musical city) plays this work in a most satisfying manner. The generally buccolic mood of this music does not require the elegance that the Lener exploited to make it a remembered experience. There is a freer spirit in this performance without loss of unanimity that satisfies, and these players do capture the varying moods of the music. From the light-flowing, elative mood of the opening movement to the high-spirited and often whimsical finale, the Boskovsky Quartet play with expressive ardor. They do not let the finale run away with itself as the Busch group did. Moreover, they perform the Dumka with its Slavic contrasts as though they believed in it, and despite the awkward double stoppings of the Romance they keep their playing expressive and tonally beautiful. If there is a romantic glow to this ensemble, it is not out-of-order in this music.

Dyorak wrote this work in his 38th year when he was particularly absorbed with racial elements, the music stems from pure Czech and Slavic influences. It is the one quartet "best suited as an introduction to the Dvorak world of tones." For all the lovely qualities of the F major Quartet, known as The American, this work owns a greater appeal for me. The recording is rich-toned and on the whole well monitored. Highly recommended.

—P.H.R.

FAURE: Sonata in A major, Op. 13; Lola Bobesco (violin) and Jacques Genty (piano). London 10" LP disc LPS 327, \$4.95.

▲VIOLINISTS favor this work and curiously neglect Fauré's second violin sonata which I have always found more interesting because it lies closest to his great songs. There is a sort of classical serenity in much of Fauré's chamber music which some people do not favor; it is apparent in the A major Sonata even though the trio section of the scherzo reminds us of Schumann. Fauré's depths are subtle ones and not all performers sense this. I think that Mischa Elman tried to penetrate this work more than anyone else whose performance on records has come my way. Heifetz was emotionally cool but tonally more lustrous, but his pianist did not share equal opportunities. Mittmann with Elman was better matched. Genty with Bobesco is also better matched, but neither of these players get under the surface of the music. They have been handsomely recorded but not without some rattles in the piano. -P.H.R.

HAYDN: Quartet in G major, Op. 76, No. 1; Quartet in E flat major, Op. 76, No. 6; Barchet String Quartet (Reinhold Barchet, 1st violin; Franz Hopfner, 2nd violin; Heinz Kirchner, viola; Siegfried Barchet, cello). Renaissance LP disc X 33, \$5.95.

▲THE SIX QUARTETS of Haydn's Opus 76 are among his finest masterworks. They are "the pride and joy of every quartetter," as more than one group admits. With this issue of Nos. 1 and 6, Op. 76 is now completely available on LP discs. One would have liked a single group to have played all six — preferrably the Budapest players who made such a handsome recording of No. 4 ("Sunrise"), or perhaps the Galimars who recorded Nos. 2 and 3 ("Emperor") — but the other performances are nonetheless welcome at this time.

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The Barchet Quartet is a group from Stuttgart (now behind the iron curtain). The first violinist is the leader of Munchinger's Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra which London has recorded extensively. Very likely all four musicians are associated with the same organization. The performances are carefully planned and executed with more flexibility of rhythm and feeling in No. 6, which curiously is not regarded as the most grateful quartet of Op. 76. No. 1 is technically more difficult which may account for the pedantic style of playing. Barchet's violin dominates the ensemble on occasion. The recording is lacking in resonance though clearly defined, especially in the outer voices. This lack of resonsance tends to diminish the coloration of tone in the fast movements, often giving a dry quality to the string playing. The slow movements fare better, and in them there is appreciably expressive tonal quality.-P.H.R.

HINDEMITH: Kleine Kammermusik, Op. 24, No. 2; MILHAUD: La Cheminee du Roi Rene; IBERT: Trois Pieces Breves; Harold Bennett (flute), Harry Shulman (oboe), David Weber (clarinet), Leonard Sharrow (bassoon) and Fred Klein (horn). Stradivari LP disc STR 606, \$5.95.

▲HERE is an excellent disc that it is my pleasure to recommend highly on every count. Three attractive modern pieces, expertly written, beautifully played by a group of virtuosi, cleanly and brightly recorded — what more could any one ask for, especially if he remembered the old Los Angeles recording (Columbia set X-149, withdrawn) of the Hindemith piece? It was very good in its day, but this new one is even better. The Kanmermusik is a fascinating score, one of Hindemith's most nourishing. Dating from 1922, it is packed with mocking little tunes brimming with sarcastic energy.

The French pieces are very good, too, in their individual Gallic ways. The Ibert is extremely gay and witty, borrowing quotations from Bach, Brahms and others. The Milhaud is a bit more thoughtful and weighty. It is particularly well written to favor the timbres and best registers of the instruments employed.

—A.W.P.

MOZART: Trios for Piano, Violin and Cello, 1 - 6, K.496, 542, 664, 502, 548 and 254; Agi Jambor (piano), Victor Aitay (violin) and Janos Starkner (cello). Period LP set 3 discs, SLPL 525, \$17.85. Trios, K.502 and 542; The Boston Trio—Abba Bogin (piano), Ruth Posselt (violin) and Samuel Mayes (cello). Allegro LP disc ALG 3014, \$5.95.

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▲HERE, finally, are all seven piano trios of Mozart. Musicologically they are highly important in that they were the first works to reinstate the two string instruments to an integral position in the trio form. Most of the Haydn trios can dispense with both violin and cello parts without any great loss because the piano, just emerging into the solo field at that time, doubles all parts. In the Mozart trios, particularly the later ones, all instruments have equal voice and combine to create works of great beauty and power. Musically they are important in that, well, they're Mozart.

Previously, only three trios had been recorded — including the K.564 which Einstein has said is really arranged from a piano sonata. Thus these two new recordings are really definitive so far as intentions go. In performance the Allegro group is better. Not only have they more fluency but their tempi seems more in accord with the music. In addition they are favored by their recording which gives equal emphasis to each instrument, unlike the Period recording which obscures some very fine cello playing. Of course, the Period people do six trios and the Allegro, only two. Take your choice or accept duplication of K.542. —D.R.

SCHUBERT: Trio No. 1 in B flat major; The Carnegie Trio — Anthonio Makas (piano); I. Gralnick (violin); Ralph Oxman (cello). Program LP disc EXLP 703, \$5.95.

▲THE PIANO TRIOS of Schubert — Op. 99 and 100 — contain some of the finest chamber music from the 19th century. The first is a delight from beginning to end.

Probably the finest performance of this music was recorded by Thibaud, Casals and Cortot (Victor set 11—withdrawn) and the Carnegie Trio is not up to their superlative level. Neither is it as good as the more recent performance by the Trio de Trieste (HMV C3792/4); but it is superior to the only other LP version — that of Joseph Benvenuti, Rene Benedetti and André Navarrá (Vox PL 1770). The Carnegie is a fine trio. The only thing that takes from their

brilliance is an occasional lush string tone; the pianist is brilliant, although this recording unfortunately favors the strings. One slight complaint about the disc: Vox got the entire work, well-recorded, onto one 10" LP while Program — in not so fine a recording — takes a full 12", with a corresponding rise in the price. —D.R.

Keyboard

BALLENTINE: Variations in the Styles of Famous Composers on Mary Had a Little Lamb — Series I and II; Edward Ballentine (piano). Festival LP disc 70-201, \$5.95.

▲BALLENTINE, associated with the Harvard Music Department, wrote his cleverly superficial variations on the well known nursery tune in the styles of different composers in 1924 and 1943. There are ten variations in each series. The first group in the styles of Mozart and nine 19th-century composers — antedates the later clever stylizations of Alec Templeton. The second group has more modern adaptations plus Bach, Schumann and Franck. A few of these pieces at one sitting are amusing, but at best they can prove no more than an attractive passing fancy to try out on friends who think they know styles in music. All are well played by the composer, but better recorded by Festival's engineers. -J.G.R.

BACH: The Well-Tempered Clavier, Book I — Preludes and Fugues Nos. 17 thru 24; Wanda Landowska (harpsichord). RCA Victor LP disc LM-1136, \$5.45.

▲SOMEONE once said that Landowska's harpsichord playing had a "lordly clang" to it. That it has. Today, it is quite different from her playing before the war - there is not the subtlety and tenderness that once was hers to command. But it is amazingly spontaneous, alive, assertive and full of an authority that has been acclaimed, though there are those who will say the authority is all her own. Isabelle Nef, the French harpsichordist who recorded all the Preludes and Fugues of Bach's famous Well-Tempered Clavier for Ciseau Lyre, has not the same stamp of authority that Landowska commands. Nor does she have the amazing technique and vitality, but she brings to her playing often a warmth of expression that Landowska eschews. Perhaps, as Mr. Miller said previously, Landowska has become too much of a legend in her own time. Somehow, when she makes music one seems unable to forget that it is Landowska playing, which does not seem quite right in Bach, even in his Well-Tempered Clavier which is by and large a series of etudes in set patterns. Victor has gone to great pains to record this artist, and I suspect she has recorded and re-recorded all of the pieces so far issued many times to get the results she desires. Listening to her performances, I feel certain, few will deny that hers is a commanding artistry that vitalizes Bach in a "lordly" manner.

BEETHOVEN: Sonala in A major, Op. 2, No. 2; Sonala in C minor, Op. 111; Kurt Appelbaum (piano). Westminster LP disc WL-5075, \$5.95.

ATHIS IS THE SECOND disc in the Beethoven piano sonata cycle currently sponsored by Westminster. The previous one was devoted to the Waldstein and the Sonala in D, Op. 10, No. 3. Applebaum does not make as good an impression here. For some reason his playing is less steady, his rhythm less secure. Admittedly the C minor Sonata is one of the most difficult works of the repertoire. Besides a superhuman musical message that has to be maintained, there are some tricky technical problems (including an awkward series of trills that simply cannot be managed). Applebaum's technique is not of an order to allow him free play after the second variation of the finale. And in the Sonata in A his fingers are curiously capricious, though his general musicianship and integrity come through. Let us hope that the pianist had an off-day when he made this recording.

-H.C.S.

BEETHOVEN: Sonalas in C minor and F major, Op. 10, Nos. 1 and 2; Sonala in G major, Op. 79; Wilhe'm Backhaus. London LP disc LLP-393, \$5.95.

BEETHOVEN: Sonata in D minor, Op. 31, No. 2; Sonata in E flat, Op. 81a; Guiomar Novaes (piano). Vox LP disc PL-6270, \$5.95.

▲I HAVE YET to hear a poor Novaes disc in her current series for Vox. Here she plays two of the more romantic of the Beethoven

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sonatas — the D minor, sometimes known as the Tempest, and the E flat, always known as Les Adieux. Again there is little to do but marvel at the flexibility of this great pianist's keyboard approach, her instinctive solutions of the musical problems, and her marvelous sense of color. There is nothing scholarly about Novaes' Beethoven, but she comes closer to a realization of what I think Beethoven intended than almost any pianist I have heard. Part of this is due to her sense of rhythm; but most, I suspect, to her ability to keep a msucial line in perpetual tension.

A comparison between her playing and Backhaus' is most interesting. Backhaus, too, is a great pianist. He has given us unequal performances, but at his best - and he is at his best in these three sonatas - his interpretations have an authority that few can match. And that is the key word: "authority." Backhaus has superb discipline, musicianship, honesty. Novaes is more of a poet, more inclined to let her instincts carry her along. Backhaus, German-trained, plays according to the book, though with a rare measure of individuality for one of his schooling. He is a descendent of the classic school of pianism, whereas Novaes is a throwback to the romantic pianists. But both are great, and it would be a supremely bigoted soul who would uphold one to the detriment of the other.

The London disc is a more satisfactory recording — greater color and overtone. The Vox disc is adequate, but little more.

-H.C.S.

BRAHMS: Three Intermezzos, Op. 117; Rhapsodies in B minor and G minor, Op. 79; Wilhelm Kempff (piano). London 10" disc LPS 205, \$4.95.

▲THIS is the most uneven and unsympathetic playing that I have ever heard from Kempff. It is too heavy and deliberate. How different, more at home, Kempff is in Beethoven and Schubert. Just what eludes him in Brahms, I cannot say. In the Intermezzos he is better than in the two slow Rhapsodies, but the recording engineers seem to have handled this assignment badly, for there is tonal chattering on occasion and evidences of monitoring that make the soft passages all on the loud side. In truth, there is nothing very rhapsodical about the Rhapsodies, but some pianists manage better than Kempff to

give them some semblance of their title by more fervent treatment. He plays them too slowly. The recording on this side is better.

COUPERIN: Quartrième Livre de Pièces de Clavecin: Vingt-quatrième Ordre; Eta Harich Schneider (harpsichord). Urania LP disc URLP 5001, \$4.75.

▲THE TWENTY-FOURTH ORDER of harpsichord pieces in A major was written in 1730 when Couperin was sixty. It is distinguished by one of the noblest of all the composer's smaller works, the passacaglia, L'Amphibie. This is not the conventional chaconne-rondeau at all but a series of variations over a very freely treated ground-bass, which mount into greater and greater contrapuntal glory. It is, in fact, the only one of Couperin's works which can compare with the chaconnes from the two-violin suites. The rest of the collection is made up of faintly programmatic delicacies as endearing as the passacaglia is austere.

Mme. Harich Schneider made several Couperin recordings long before the war and it is good to see that her long years in Germany and Japan, practicing and concerting, have, if anything, improved her technique. There may be some question as to the advisability of playing Couperin in the grand manner that she employs, with all stops pulled as it were; but nothing can be said against her superlative technique and her extremely nice feeling for Couperin in his graver moments. The recording more successfully captures the sound of the instrument than any other I've heard. —D.R.

HAYDN: Sonata No. 48 in C major and Sonata No. 51 in D major; Virginia Pleasants (piano). Haydn Society 10" LP disc HSLP-3032, \$4.75.

▲HERE are two mature piano sonatas of Haydn that are infrequently played and that deserve to be heard far more often. Both are completely arresting works with a nobility of conception that sets them apart from the earlier keyboard products that Haydn designed for his students.

The earlier sonata is in the familiar twomovement form. The first movement is a free fantasia that possesses a degree of inwardness that will surprise many new Haydn enthusiasts; the finale is a racy yet subtle romp that should delight one and all. The D me Haye move nota and varie Vi

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D major Sonata is one of the loveliest of all of Haydn's works in that form. Also in two movements, it contains an opening movement notable for an almost Schubert-like lyricism and a finale of the utmost brilliance and variety.

Virginia Pleasants performs both works with appropriate strength and delicacy. The recording is superb.

—C.J.L.

LISZT: Sonala in B minor; Nikita Magaloff (piano). London 10" disc LPS-392, \$4.95.

▲THERE was a time, not too long ago, when Magaloff had super-Horowitzian ideas about the keyboard. Some of his Carnegie Hall recitals had a tendency to sound like the crash of surf on a New England beach during a northeaster. In the last two or three years, though, Magaloff evidently has re-considered his keyboard philosophy. A really big equipment he always had, and now he plays with more delicacy and restraint. But he has not solved all of his problems, and there is still a basic inconsistency to be found in his playing — the inconsistency of a frustrated virtuoso faced with musical problems that have to be dealt with.

Thus, in his performance of this sonata, there is some ravishing playing, and some excitingly stormy playing, but the two have not much relationship with each other. As a result the sonata lacks organic unity, having a tendency to sound sectionalized. The Pennario disc for Capitol, issued not very long ago, may not have some of the extraordinary detail that Magaloff's playing contains, but I think that it is a better-balanced interpretation. Victor should release on LP the great Horowitz performance - one of the outstanding things in his recorded repertoire. And, on the basis of his Liszt disc for London, I would boost Wilhelm Kempff as the logical contender for a definitive new performance. -H.S..C

MOUSSORGSKY: Pictures at an Exhibition; Julius Katchen (piano). London LP disc LLP-330, \$5.95.

▲MORE AND MORE, to these ears, the *Pictures*, in their piano version, sound duller and duller. Had not Ravel permanently established them in the repertoire through his glittering orchestral transcription, I doubt if any pianist would want to wade through the unpianistic writing, the ill-judged fortissimo

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dynamics of the final section, or the neverending Catacombs. Some striking musical ideas are present, and the Goldenberg-Schmuyle episode is one of the funniest things music has to offer. But what good are they, expressed as they are for the most part by a composer whose mind simply did not think in terms of the piano? Katchen's performance here is a good one; though if I have to listen to the work in piano form, I would prefer Horowitz's doctored-up treatment, also available on LP. —H.C.S.

MOZART: Sonala in C major, K.309; Allegro in G minor, K.312; Menuello in D major, K.355; Adagio in B minor, K. 540; Gigue in G major, K.574; played on a Stein Pianoforte by Erwin Bodky. Allegro LP disc, ALG 3012, \$5.95.

▲MOZART met Andreas Stein, considered the father of the modern piano, in 1777 and was so impressed with the maker's newest instrument, the so-called "square piano" that, only a week later, he had finished the charming little sonata here recorded. The composer marveled in a letter to his father: "When I strike hard, I can keep my finger on the note or raise it, but the sound ceases the moment I have produced it. In whatever way I touch the keys, the tone is always even." Erwin Bodky, on the faculty of Brandeis University, owns an original Stein piano and it has survived well enough to make available this nice little Mozart collection.

With the exception of the sonata which dates from 1777, all of these selections are late Mozart. The G minor allegro is a fragment from an unfinished piano sonata written as late as 1790, the same year the Menuetto was written. The deeply felt Adagio dates from 1788, and the little Gigue from 1789. The Stein piano sounds more like a clavicen than a piano but the tone, though slightly percussive, is moderately pleasing. Mr. Bodky plays the instrument moderately well and in the sonata imparts quite a bit of elegance to the music. Allegro's Galaxy Series is usually well recorded and this disc is no exception.

—D.R.

POULENC: Mouvements perpetuels, Nocturne in D, Suite française; SATIE: Descriptions automatiques, Gymnopedie No. 1, Sarabande No. 2, Gnossienne No. 3, Avandernieres pensees, Croquis et agaceries d'un gros-bon homme en bois; Francis Poulenc (piano). Columbia LP disc ML-4399, \$5.45.

▲THIS is the first in Columbia's new "Meet the Composer" series, and it is an auspicious beginning. Poulenc has chosen works that represent several sides of his rich musical character. . . Mourements perpetuels are full of wit and charm, the nocturne of dry romanticism, the Suite française of all the simple grace that one would associate with the recreation of a collection of lovely, ancient French dances.

The self-effacing Poulenc has also rendered hommage to his early master, Erik Satie, by presenting a handful of the latter's most deliciously funny and moving compositions. Many of these are now available for the first time; only the *Gymnopedie No. 1* (known mainly in the Debussy orchestration) will probably be familiar to most listeners. All are as fresh as springtime and as straightforward as anything written around the turn of the century.

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Much of the musical value on this LP would be lost if Poulenc's pianism was not of such unusual distinction. It is not, as one might expect from a composer, merely adequate playing; it is exquisite and noble and entirely as good as the best we've heard in many a day. Fortunately, the recording captures the piano sound faithfully. This is a disc not to be missed.

—C.J.L.

SCARLATTI: Eleven Sonatas; Clara Haskil (piano). Westminster LP disc WL-5072, \$5.95.

▲THOUGH all of Domenico Scarlatti's sonatas were conceived for, and are more effective on, the harpsichord, they are of such high musical quality and of such value for developing or displaying manual dexterity that almost every pianist plays some of them. Many pianists have recorded these works in the past; but no one, in my view, has performed them with more grace, refinement, or sensitivity than Clara Haskil. Aside from occasional blurring of some of the rapid figurations, Haskil's playing is work of an unusually high order. So also are Westminster's recording and surfaces.

The sonatas included on this LP are Longo No. 256 in C sharp minor, No. 388 in G, No. 457 in C, No. 386 in G minor, No. 142 in E flat, No. 171 in F minor, No. 475 in F minor, No. 483 in A, No. 33 in B minor, No. 255 in C. and No. 278 in F. —C.J.L,

Voice

BACH: Come, Jesu, come; The Spirit also helpeth us; The Cantata Singers conducted by Reginald Jacques. London 10" LP disc LPS 128, \$4.95.

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▲THE FIRST of these two motets was included in the Schola Cantorum disc of various Bachiana (Columbia ML 2102) and the second may be found in a curiously effective performance by the Dessoff Choirs made in the Armor Hall of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (Concert Hall CHC 44, Baroque Choral Music). This time the texts are in English translation, a fact that helps little, especially as the none too clear diction of the choir is obviously not applied to the words printed on the liner. Aside from this hardly unimportant matter, this is not one of those rare performances in which the difficulties of the music are overcome with transforming and communicative ease. The singers, as so often the case with this music, seem just about able to cope with the technical problems. The Schola Cantorum record was likewise no masterpiece, but even those who do not understand the original words could at least be certain that Mr. Ross' forces were singing German. For FFRR, London's new record seems strangely lacking in perspective. -P.L.M.

BUXTEHUDE: Alles was ihr tut (cantata)t Magnificat noni toni (organ); Magnifica; (5 voices); LUEBECK: Hilf deinem Volk; Gott, wie deine Name (cantatas); Prelude and Fugue in C minor; Prelude and Fugue in E (organ); Anna Maria Augenstein (soprano), Hetty Plümacher (contralto), Werner Hohmann (tenor), Otto von Rohr (basso), Eva Hölderin (organ), Herbert Liedecke (organ), Stuttgart Choral Society and Suebian Symphony Orchestra conducted by Hans Grischkat. Renaissance LP discs X-30 and X-32, \$5.95 each.

▲A MISTAKEN TRADITION has it that Vincent Luebeck (1654-1740) was a pupil of Dietrich Buxtehude (1637-1707) — an idea which may have sprung from the fame conferred upon the town of Luebeck by Buxtehude's musical ministrations there. In any case it is fitting to consider together these

striking works of Bach's great forerunners. Buxtehude, like Heinrich Schütz, always manages an unforgettable turn or two in every work we hear. In Alles was ihr tut it is a choral aria — Dir, dir, Höchster, dir alleine - a sustained melody with something of the quality made familiar in Aksel Schiotz' recording of the solo cantata Was mich auf dieser Welt betrübt (HMV DB 5240). Were there nothing else on the disc it would be worth owning for this part. But this is by no means all. The chorus does some fine work in the cantata, and it is good to hear so just a balance with the orchestra; here is no crowding of the voices. The soloists are modest but effective, and on this first side the reproduction is excellent. I had some difficulty in reproducing the two Magnificats on the reverse. The otherwise admirable organ performance by Liedecke is marred by some peculiar vibrations, and this effect continues through the opening of the choral work. This is a pity, but after all a minor blemish on an otherwise fine record.

Not much of Luebeck's work has survived. One of his cantatas was an outstanding part of the Gramophone Shop's collection of Baroque cantatas, and a Prelude and Fugue may be found in a harpsichord program of the late Mrs. Weiss-Mann (Allegro AL 15). The difficulties of playing trumpets in C make the performance of Gott, wie deine Name something of an ordeal, but otherwise both cantatas are well done. Hölderein's organ playing is exceptional. The recording is bright and clean.

—P.L.M.

BYRD: Mass for five voices; The Flee-Street Choir conducted by T. B. Lawt rence. London 10" LP disc LPS 372' \$4.95.

▲THIS REPLACES an admired performance recorded several years back (Decca K 1058-60), and with it two of Byrd's three masses are available on LP sung by this celebrated English choir. For those who would not wait for the same group to record the three-voice mass, there was a disc with this mass and that for four voices in a performance by John Bath's Choral Society of London (Allegro ALG 101) considered in our April issue. If, as seems likely, the issue of two of these works means a promise of the third, I would advise those who have not invested in the Bath recording to wait for Mr.

Lawrence's three-voice mass. Perhaps it will suffice to recall here that the five-voice mass is considered by many the most beautiful of the three, and that this performance is up to the well known standard of the choir. I was mildly disappointed in the FFRR reproduction of the four-voice mass when I reviewed it for the March issue; this new disc pleases me better. It also pleases me that this time no re-arranging of the order of the mass has been found necessary here. —P.L.M.

DELIBES: Lakme — Bell Song; BENE-DICT (arr. Legrand): Carnival of Venice; ROSSINI: The Barber of Seville — Rosina's Aria; ADAM (arr. Legrand): Ahl vous dirai-je; VERDI: Rigoletto — Gilda's Aria (all sung in French); Mado Robin (soprano) with the New Symphony Orchestra conducted by Richard Blareau. London 10" LP disc LPS 255, \$4.95.

▲MISS ROBIN has recently been a Parisian sensation. She has a white, ringing coloratura voice which ascends with ease and accuracy into the upper reaches to a high G sharp above high C. Her production is uneven, clear on top, foggy below. Her use of her top tones in these offerings (incorrectly labelled Operatic Recital) is more certain than are that of Erna Sack, who is her chief rival today. Moreover, Miss Robin has little trouble with pitch. Obviously, the Benedict Variations and the Adam air (mistakenly attributed to Mozart) have been arranged for her wide-ranged exploits. The soprano should enjoy a long career, especially if she learns the Italian language. Una voce fa and Caro nome fare best in their native tongue. Excellent recording of voice and firstrate orchestral accompaniments. -J.N.

DVORAK: Strains from Moravia, Op. 32 (12 Duets for Soprano and Contralto); Marta Fuchs and Margarete Klose, with Michael Raucheisen at the piano. Urania 10" LP disc 5002, \$4.95.

▲THE PHONOGRAPH is an excellent medium for duets like these — a form of song-writing which was very popular in the latter part of the 19th century but no longer favored today. When these lilting melodic pieces appeared in 1878, Dvorak was hailed by the German musical world for the first time. Brahms is said to have been so favorably impressed with them that he recom-

mended Simrock publish them. These duets are original settings of poems from Susil's collection of Moravian national songs. The charm lies in their rhythmic grace rather than in their sentiment. The two distinguished artists sing them simply and pleasingly, and Raucheisen provides fine accompaniments. Satisfactory recording.

—J.N.

HAYDN: Missa Sanctae Caeciliae; Rosl Schwaiger (soprano), Sieglinde Wagner (contralto), Herbert Handt (tenor), Walter Berry (basso), Joseph Nabois (organ), Akademie Chorus and Vienna Symphony Orchestra conducted by Hans Gillesberger. Haydn Society HSLP 2028, 2 LP discs, \$11.90.

▲THIS is an early work, longer and more elaborate than others we have been hearing by way of the Haydn Society. It is rather a Baroque festival mass than a liturgical one, made up of long sections with a good deal of florid writing in the arias and many repetitions of the words. There are many fine things in it, as the moving Et incarnatus est for solo voices, the joyous Benedictus, etc. The performance has been carefully and lovingly prepared, with chorus and orchestra in excellent form and an unusually good solo quartet One might take exception to Handt's orcasional approach to the Italianate sob, but this is a minor detail. The recorded balance is generally admirable; only in some of the quartet sections are the singers definitely closer than they should be. -P.L.M.

LEHAR: The Merry Widow (sung in German); Max Lichtegg (Danilo), Nora Jungwirth (Hanna Glawari), Willy Schonewiss (Baron), Hans Hopf (Camille), Wanda von Kobierska (Valencienne), Willy Ferenz (Cascada), Hugo Kratz (Raoul), Chorus of the State Theater and the Zurich Tonhalle Orchestra conducted by Victor Reinshagen. London LP disc LLP 380, \$5.95.

▲THAT TUNEFUL and vivacious operetta, The Merry Widow, is at best a mixed blessing for American listeners sung in German. However, they seem very adept at arranging this sort of thing in Zurich, for London has obtained quite a few recordings of operetta selections from this source. The cast — a group of Continental singers who are probably old hands at this kind of entertainment

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acquit themselves quite satisfactorily. Max Lichtegg favors the sentimental approach to his role, and so do some of the others. Nora Jungwirth, who has a sweet voice, makes a favorable impression as the Merry Widow. The recording is marked complete (which refers to the musical score only - there is no spoken dialogue), however, the final waltz seems to be much shorter than I remember it in the theater. I found it rather hard to place everybody without a libretto, which is not given out with the record. It's quite some time since I heard The Merry Widow, but this well recorded version substantiated my memories of a pleasingly tuneful evening in the theater. -J.N.

LOEWE: Tom the Rhymer; Edward; Archibald Douglas; Emile Renan (baritone) and Emilia Mitrani (piano). Allegro 10" LP disc AL 108, \$4.45.

▲IT IS a pity that a composer so important and so little known as Loewe should for the second time be represented on LP with so little justice. The writer of the accompanying notes has read the meager facts in a musical dictionary or two, has learned that Loewe wrote "four hundred ballads and songs," and has drawn upon his own imagination for the information that these were set mostly "to the texts of Scottish Border Ballads which were translated into German." To be sure, Tom der Reimer and Edward were such ballads which Loewe found in Herder's great international collection, but this is only one facet of the composer's fabulous if uneven output.

As for Archibald Douglas, if, as we are assured, Mr. Renan has reverted to "the original Scottish text," he has found something previously not known to exist. The German poem is not from Herder, but has always been acknowledged an original work of Theodor Fontane (1819-1898), a poet, novelist, diplomat, war correspondent and critic, who found his source in the old ballad of Archie of Kilspindie, but added a touch of true Teutonic patriotic fervor at the end. Those interested in the historical background of this song are referred to Sir Walter Scott's Minstrelsev of the Scottish Border. But what really matters here is the performance. If I was less than rapturous over Strienz's Loewe recital (ARG-April, 1951) I found more to admire in it than is evident here. Mr. Renan's tone is altogether too bland, and his efforts at dramatic effect might be characterized as "leading to strength through weakness."

-P.L.M.

MOZART: Don Giovanni — Dalla sua pace, Il mio tesoro; Die Zauberflöte — Dies Bildnis ist bezauben schön; STRAUSS Richard: Capriccio — Kein andres, dar mir so im Herzen loht; SCHUMANN: De-Nussbaum, Die Lotusblume; WOLF: Nims mersalte liebe, Der Musikant, Auf ein alle, Bild, Der Gartner; STRAUSS Sländchen Zueignung; Anton Dermota (tenor) with Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Karl Böhm, and with Hilde Dermota (piano). London LP disc LLP-345, \$5.95.

ANTON DERMOTA, a tenor of Yugoslav origin, has a warm, dark-hued voice which recalls memories of Tauber though his placement is not always as assured. In the days of our parents, he would have been called a romantic tenor, but today some may call him a sentimental singer. A tendency to permit his tone to become muffled by a throaty quality in the lower range makes him strain for top tones in the operatic arias. His

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1226 Montgomery Avenue Narberth, Pennsylvania audible breathing suggests too much breath pressure. Most of the lieder are sung mezzaroce with caressing tones, which could have been varied advantageously with more manly ardor on occasion. While his Mozart singing is stylistically acceptable, it stresses sentiment. His use of breath does not permit him to sing unbrokenly the long phrases in Il mio tesoro. For all his inequalities, the tenor has an appealing voice and many listeners will undoubtedly find his first LP recital enjoyable. Karl Böhm provides firstrate orchestral accompaniments and the singer's wife is a discreet pianistic partner. The inclusion of an aria from Strauss's last opera, Capriccio (1942), has interest, though the music seems studied. Its modern orchestration includes a harpsichord. London's recording is flawless except for a few rattles in the piano on loud passages.

MOZART: La Finta giardiniera, K. 196 (sung in German); Margot Guillaume (Sandrina), Elinor Junker-Giesen (Serpetta), Gertrud Jenne (Arminda), Hetty Plümacher (Ramiro), Werner Hohmann (Count Belfiore), Alfred Pfeifle (Podesta), Gustav Neidlinger (Nardo), Ton-Studio Orchestra of Stuttgart conducted by Rolf Reinhardt. Period LP set, 3 discs, \$17.85.

▲ MOZART'S The Pretended Garden-Girl was commissioned for the carnaval of 1775 at Munich. The librettist of this entangled comedy of errors is unknown, which is perhaps just as well for - despite the fact that such absurdities were accepted in those days - the incredible imbroglios of the characters are so entangled that human interest is hardly sustained. The opera is a series of arias and ensembles broken by some recitatives that scarcely encourage acting. This sort of thing takes on the character of a human puppet show, holding little interest in the theater of today: The opera was a success at Munich, but interest in it slackened as time passed until today it is virtually unknown. Though hampered by this libretto, Mozart at 18 proved his worth as a dramatic writer and gave some semblance of life to his characters. There is in this work "a musical inventiveness that makes many of the songs unforgettably haunting," as Eric Blom has said, and "plainly shows the growing master." Idomeneo, Mozart's opera seria, followed La Finta.

This recording is an abridgement of the score — cutting a number of arias and all recitatives (omissions are noted in the libretto). The performance has been entrusted to a competent group of singers, most of whom have appealing voices. This makes for an artistic homogenity which is all to the good; any stellar operatic talent would have been an intrusion. The orchestra though small is quite adequate, but Reinhardt's direction is lacking in fluency and grace and not very imaginative. Of the studio variety, the recording is satisfactory.

Omission of recitatives — virtually all of them — seems a mistake, for the string of solo vocal airs is unrelieved; and, despite the charm and wit of many, the effect tends to retard memories of the best. In view of the fact that it is unlikely another recording of this neglected opera will be released in the near future, this set will nevertheless sustain some interest among Mozart enthusiasts.

-P.H.R.

MOZART: Trios: Grazie agl' inganni tuoi, K.532; Piu non si trovano, K.549; Mi lagnero tacendo, K.437; Due pupille amabili, K.439; Se lontan ben mio tu sei, K.438; Luci care, luci belle, K.346 (439a); Ecco quel fiero instante, K.436; Caro, bell' idol mio, K.562; La clemenza di Tito - Vengo! Aspettate!, K.621; Zaide — O selige Wonne, K.344; La villanella rapita (Bianchi) Mandina amabile, K.480; Das Bandel, K.441; The Mozart Trio (Katherine Hansel, soprano, Joseph Collins, baritone, John Yard, baritone) with William Reese (Piano). Den LP disc DR 1, \$5.95. ▲THIS PROGRAM makes a pleasing novelty: one seldom hears the non-operatic ensembles of Mozart, or for that matter of any other great composer. The Mozart Trio has been organized to fill this gap in our experience; and though the singers quite naturally dispense with the intended instrumental accompaniments in favor of the piano, they do present their music with style as well as What needs to be told about the music, including a statement of the instrumentaton in each case, will be found in William Ober's comprehensive notes. One of the baritones stands out by a certain vocal richness; his companions are modestly endowed. One wishes occasionally for a meatier soprano, especially in the Clemenza di Tito excerpt.

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excerpt. For all that one does not tire of the well recorded program. -P.L.M.

NICOLAI: The Merry Wives of Windsor (sung in German); Kurt Böhme (Falstaff), Theodor Horand (Ford), Helmut Eyle (Page), Aloys Kuhnert (Fenton), Paul Reinecke (Slender), Wolfgang Markgraf (Dr. Caius), Ingeborg Schmitt-Stein (Mrs. Ford), Erna Westenberger (Mrs. Page), Irma Kastner (Anne Page), Chorus and Orchestra of the Mitteldeutsche Rundfunk, Leipzig conducted by Rolf Kleinert. Oceanic set 303, 2 LP discs, \$11.90.

▲NICOLAI'S Merry Wives of Windsor, based on Shakespeare's comedy, has long held the stage in Germany. It proved a popular success when first presented in 1849 at Berlin, and also later in Vienna and London. It retained its place as one of the most popular comic operas for many years. Despite the fact that Verdi's Falstaff is a greater score, Nicolai's breezy and tuneful Merry Wires has a freshness and sparkle which when well produced - proves engaging entertainment.

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The present performance is sadly uneven. The coarse orchestral playing prompts consistent shouting from the singers, and only two of the cast, Böhme and Horand, suggest seasoned artists. The women are tonally wavery and shrill: the men on the whole are better singers. But Nicolai's Merry Wives without a competent Mistress Ford is a poor show. Most of the singers as well as the conductor ignore all pianissimo markings of the composer. As this was a radio production, such shortcomings are not so surprising. The recording is a mixed blessing some wavers and suggestions of poor tape splicing and consistently too-close microphone placement.

PRE-BAROQUE SACRED MUSIC: Magnificat in the eighth mode (Dufay); Veni sancte spiritus (Plainsong, 12th century); Auditi meo dabis; Non avertas faciem tuam; Ipsa te cogat pietas (Lasso) Singt dem Herrn (Praetorius); O bone Jesu (Ingegneri); Non nobis, Domine (Byrd); Spiritus tuus (Lasso); Veni creator spiritus (Josquin des Pres); Magnificat in the fourth tone (Palestrina); Radcliffe Choral Society and Harvard University Choir conducted by William F. Russell. Festival 10" LP disc FLP 70-202, \$4.75.

PALESTRINA: Magnificat; Missa Sacerdoles Domini - Pleni sunt coeli; Missa O Rex Gloriae — Crucifixus; Missa Descendit angelus Domini - Benedictus; Jesu, Rex admirabilis: Tua Jesu dilectio: Adoramus te, Christe; Confilemini Domino; Salve regina; Hodie Christus natus est; Period Choral Society conducted by Robert Strassburg. Period LP disc SPLP 513, \$5.95.

▲THESE TWO PROGRAMS of polyphonic music are made up of "segregated" performances — that is to say Radcliffe and Harvard do not mix on the Festival disc, and Mr. Strassburg's Period group contains no men. Highest honors go to Radcliffe, whose singing of the breathtakingly beautiful Dufay Magnificat reflects credit on all concerned. The rest of that program is given over to Harvard, and the young men, though outclassed, do well enough. Their account of the Palestrina Magnificat makes an interesting contrast with the same piece done by Strassburg's ladies. For historical accuracy and - I am convinced - complete stylistic effect, the music would be better with the etherial quality of boy voices; but I admit that boy choirs thoroughly at home in it are not too plentiful. Granting a compromise, the vocal registers of the ladies are more effective than those of the men. Yet because of the more straightforward approach of the conductor, my preference in this choice goes to Harvard.

The Period Singers fill out their first LP side with short selections from various masses, and give the second over to motets, all of which are welcome and worth having. My one real complaint (and this is related to my preference for boy's voices) concerns the over-vibrant quality of the womens' tone. As for the Harvard men, aside from a certain over enthusiasm in the plainsong selection, they meet the standard expected of them. Incidentally, once more Ingegneri's O bone Jesu is ascribed to Palestrina. -P.L.M.

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PUCCINI: Manon Lescaul (Complete Opera in 4 Acts); Maria Zamboni (Manon), Francesco Merli (Des Grieux), Anna Masetti Bassi (A Singer), Lorenzo Conati (Lescaut), Attilio Bordinali (Geronte), Giuseppe Nessi (Edmondo, The Dancing Master, A Lamplighter), Aristede Baracchi (The Innkeeper, Sergeant), Natalie Villa (Commandent), with Chorus and the Milan Symphony Orchestra conducted by Lorenzo Molajoli. Columbia LP set SL 111, 2 discs, \$10.90.

▲THIS RECORDING, which dates back over two decades, has been issued because of many requests. Columbia has been most successful in giving the reproduction a satisfying natural sound — the singers are realistic though the lack of high fidelity in the orchestra is noticeable. But one must admit that the Italian engineers in the days goneby knew something about a representative balance between singers and orchestra.

Manon Lescaut has enjoyed greater popularity in Italy than elsewhere since its premiere at Turin on February 1st, 1893. Its merits as an operatic score are indubitable, for it contains some of the most ardent pages Puccini ever devised. There can be no question that it is overshadowed by Massenet's Manon, and Columbia should also re-issue on LP the fine French performance of the latter opera which was released in the 1930s.

As a performance, this is a typical Italian presentation — the sort of production one would hear in smaller theaters. There is plenty of Latin enthusiasm and fervor; some good singing and some not so good. The conductor was always a capable director and one senses his stabilizing hand behind the precedings. Merli, who sang one season at the Metropolitan in 1932-33, is no stylist but he has - or had when he sang in this recording a powerful and telling voice. Zamboni, whose production is uneven, is an appealing Manon. Conati's Lescaut is rather tame, and Bordinali's Geronte lacks humor and essential characterization. —P.H.R.

PUCCINI: La Tosca — Recondita armonia and E lucevan le stelle; Ferruccio Tagliavini (tenor) with RCA Victor Orchestra conducted by Jean Paul Morel. RCA Victor 45 rpm disc 49-3295, \$1.10.

▲TAGLIAVINI sings the first act aria straightforwardly with little feeling for the

reflective character of the words. This is quite a different performance than his recent H.M.V. (DB21134) in which the tenor was more emotional and lachrymose. In the third act aria, the tenor creates the mood better and sings with great beauty of tone but not without holding back on occasion and emitting the familiar Italianate burp at the end. Morel gives admirable orchestral support. Excellent recording.

—J.N.

RAMEAU: Hippolyte et Aricie (Excerpts);
Claudine Verneuil (Aricie), Geneviéve
Moizan (Phèdre), Flore Wend (Une Matelote, Une Chasseresse), Raymond Amade
(Hippolyte), Choir and Symphony Orchestra conducted by Roger Désormiere.
Oiseau-Lyre LP disc OLLD-10, \$5.95.

▲AROUND THE TURN of the century, Debussy remarked that Rameau "to many people is the author of nothing but the celebrated Rigaudon from Dardanus." Except to a handful of record listeners, the great 18th century French composer is probably scarcely more today. If, then, for no other reason than that Hippolyte et Aricie is fresh music by an acknowledged "name," it would be good to have these excerpts on LP. This disc, however, holds a considerably greater attraction.

It is magnificent music written at the time (1733 — the composer was 50) when Rameau had begun to take over the mantle of maitre d'opéra from his predecessor Lully. Hippolyte, which was successful chiefly because it aroused such intense discussion, contained many striking innovations designed to further the progress of real drama on the operatic stage. There are a welter of superb choruses, a matchless instrumental coloration used to make expressive points, and sharply pointed declamatory recitative that Debussy said is "without any affectation of German profundity or over-emphasis or impatient explanation, as if to say: 'You are a collection of utter idiots who understand nothing unless you are first compelled to believe that the moon is made of green cheese."

The excerpts presented here are two Sailors' airs, two rigaudons, and the Matelote's air: L'Amour comme Neptune from the third act; an aria by Hippolyte, another by Aricie, and a duet between the two, the chorus: Faisons partout voler nos traits, premier air, second air en rondeau, premier menuet, second air en rondeau, premier menuet,

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ond menuet en rondeau, the chorus: Quel bruit, and Phedre's lament: Hippolyte n'est plus from the fourth act. Act 5 is represented by the second tableau, Aricie's aria: Quel doux concerts, and the Chaconne.

The performance of these excerpts by the vocal artists named above and the unnamed chorus and orchestra is made acceptable by the outstanding leadership of Roger Désormière, one of the great living conductors of French and Russian music. The recording is bright and clean, the surfaces noiseless.

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RAVEL: Chansons madécasses; Jennie Tourel (mezzo-soprano), George Reeves (piano), John Wummer (flute), Laszlo Vargo (cello). DEBUSSY: Trois chansons de Bilitis; Jennie Tourel and George Reeves. Columbia 10" LP disc ML-2184, \$4.00.

▲THIS IS ONE of those practically flawless recordings of unusually intriguing music which does not quite succeed in replacing less perfect earlier discs. Madeleine Grey's Chansons madécasses, made under the direction of the composer himself, are certainly inferior to Tourel's as a technical performance no less than as reproduction. And Maggie Teyte's Chansons de Bilitis enjoy nothing like the "presence" of the new Columbia recording. Still Grey brought the curiously savage songs to life in a manner not given to Tourel, and there remains a warmth in Miss Teyte's singing that defies the no longer impressive sound of her discs. To those who do not know these old timers, the new LP disc can be -P.L.M. recommended.

SCHUBERT: Die Winterreise; Hans Hotter (baritone) and Michael Raucheisen (piano). Decca LP set DX 111, 2 discs, \$11.70.

▲THAT HANS HOTTER is an artist of temperament and dramatic imagination was made clear to frequenters of the Metropolitan last season; if his voice is on the wane, these other attributes of the opera house are often sufficient to make up the difficiencies.

In lieder things are somewhat different, though here again the artist's musicianliness, the rightness of his phrasing, his admirable legato and skillful use of mezza voce, and the cleanness of his intonation all count for a good deal. Stacked against these things are certain limitations in vocal color and rich-

ness — what we might call "looseness" in both tone and diction - and a tendency to be a bit too free rhythmically, in which he is abetted by the admired Mr. Raucheisen. It has been pointed out that the Winterreise songs are essentially "walking" songs; part of their effect depends on their dogged and determined movement. Still Mr. Hotter is an artist who holds the attention, and if his total achievement scarcely obliterates memories of Hüsch (HMV Society set) it brings a good Winterreise to LP. A word is due Irving Kolodin for his program notes, in which for once justice is done the poet Wilhelm Müller, and which include complete texts and the gist of their meaning. The record surfaces are not of the quietest.

GERARD SOUZAY RECITAL No. 2: Berenice — Si, tra i ceppi (Handel); In questa tomba oscura (Beethoven); Orfeo — Elle est morte (Monteverdi); Persée — Air des Songes (Lully); Ballade que feit Villon à requeste de sa mère pour prier Notre Dame (Debussy); La Grotte (Debussy); Mandoline (Debussy); Don Quichotte à Dulcine (Ravel); Gerard Souzay (baritone) with L'Orchestra de la Société des Concerts du Conservatoire de Paris conducted by Edouard Lindenberg. London LP disc LLP 194, \$5.95.

▲MR. SOUZAY'S first LP recital (disc LLP 245) was a group of Fauré and Schubert songs, sung to piano accompaniments. It was reviewed by Mr. Miller in our January 1951 issue. This second recital, so marked on the face of the record though called incorrectly on the envelope "Gerard Souzay Sings Classic Airs," is with orchestra accompaniment throughout. The baritone does not possess a large voice. There is not too great a variety in his singing nor does he attain a telling climax. However, his appealing tone and sensitive artistry are most appreciable, and here we have an opportunity to assess him in operatic music as well as song. He is most successful in the latter, especially the French songs which are sung with stylistic refinement.

His In questa tomba does not rise to real emotional urgency and is, on the whole, rather tempered. The noted contralto aria from Handel's opera Berenice is a fine declamatory piece which is not ideally suited to the singer; it asks for more feeling. The moving lament of Orfeo on hearing of Euri-

dice's death (sung in French) is sung unaffectedly but with insufficient fervor. The
style in the Lully is beautiful for its restraint.
While there has been keen competition for
this singer in the Debussy and Ravel songs,
his appealing singing and fine style make
these offerings cherishable. The recording
throughout is of London's best quality.

_IN

STRAUSS, Johann: Thousand and One Nights (Complete Operetta); Herbert Ernst Groh (Sultan Suleiman Ben Akbar, Mossu and Fisherman), Adi Appelt (Addin Abu Hassarak), Edwin Heyer (Mahmud Nerin), Carlheinz Carell (Ormuz), Ilse Mentzel (Leila), Rosl Seegers (Wally), Inge Tüxen (Zaire), Chorus and Orchestra of Radio Berlin conducted by Otto Dobrindt. Urania LP set 203, 2 discs, \$11.90.

▲THEY DO SAY in Vienna, if you mention this early opus of Johann Strauss, that this score - under another title, Indigo oder die vierzig Raüber — is the real first Viennese operetta. Despite a bad libretto, the work was a success at its premiere in 1871. Some years later, it was revised and given another story, which has to do with how the lady who captured the Sultan Suleiman's heart enticed or tricked him into agreeing to give up his Harem for her and establish monogamy in his Kingdom. I imagine this radio performance was planned to exploit the tenor Groh, who imitates Tauber in style but doesn't have the same mellowness of voice. Dobrindt is Groh's official conductor. This is a typical radio production without any dialogue, which might be confusing except for the fact that Urania supplies a libretto. The singers form a capable, willing, and agreeable cast. The Sultan's light of love has a sweet voice which blends well with his. While not in the class of London's production of Fledermaus, this performance should please, particularly as Strauss' music has a lilting delicacy and considerable charm. The composer made little effort to imitate oriental music but was centent to write à la Vienna - in so many words, to be true to himself. It all adds up to tuneful entertainment despite a silly story. The recording is quite good of its kind. -J.N.

TRADITIONAL: Hashkiveinu and Ono Bechoach (RCA Victor 45 rpm disc 49-3210); Adoshem Moloch and Retzei Vimnuchoseinu (RCA Victor 45 rpm disc 49-3211); Cantor Moshe Kusevitzky (tenor) with Abe Ellstein at the Organ. Each disc \$1.10.

▲I MUST confess to no knowledge of this traditional Hebraic music, but the singing of Cantor Kusevitzky is so fascinating with its extraordinary coloratura aspects that I feel many may be interested on hearing the records. The sponsors should have provided some information to reviewers unfamiliar with Hebraic sacred music, especially on these compositions which must have a long history. Satisfactory recording. —J.N.

VERDI: Don Carlo — Scenes from Act III; Alois Pernerstorfer (King Philip), Hilde Konetzni (Elisabeth), Elisabeth Hoengen (Princess of Eboli), Georg Oeggl (Rodrigo), Alexander Welitsch (Grand Inquisitor), the Vienna Opera Orchestra conducted by Erwin Baltzer. Capitol-Telefunken LP disc P8144, \$4.98.

▲THE UNITY of style in these selections from Don Carlo is far better than in the recent LP disc issued by Victor, where different orchestras and conductors were used. Verdi - sung in German — may not be everybody's choice, but the singers employed here are gifted artists. The record opens with an expressively sung version of Philip's aria by Pernerstorfer, then comes the duet between the King and the Grand Inquisitor. The latter - one of the most inspired and exciting scenes in the whole opera - is equally impressive, and the scene and quartet which follows in which Elisabeth, Rodrigo, and Eboli plead with the King for justice is well balanced and tonally pleasing ensemble singing. The final excerpt is the duet between Elisabeth and Eboli, in which the latter begs compassion, followed by Eboli's famous aria, O don fatale. Hoengen's voice is not a large one, but her use of it remains effective and tonally warm. The recording is typical of Telefunken's realistic engineering work.

-J.N.

VERDI: Ernani (abridged version); Iva Pacetti (Elvira), Antonio Melandri (Ernani), Gino Vanelli (Don Carlo), Corrado Zambelli (Don Ruy Gomez de Silva), Ida Mannarini (Giovanni), Giuseppe Nessi (Don Riccardo), Aristede Baracchi (Jago), Chorus and Orchestra of La Scala Opera cond
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conducted by Lorenzo Molajoli. Columbia LP disc ML-4407, \$5.45.

DONIZETTI: L'Elisir d'Amore (abridged version); Ines Alfani Tellini (Adina), Cristy Solari (Nemorino), Lorenzo Conati (Belcore), Eduardo Faticanti (Dulcamara), Ida Mannarini (Gianette), Chorus and Orchestra of La Scala Opera conducted by Lorenzo Molajoli. Columbia LP disc ML-4408, \$5.45.

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Guide

▲THESE RECORDINGS, made in the early 1930s, have been issued in response to many requests. Surprisingly, their reproduction seems less dated than one would expect and, as a matter of fact, sounds much better from these LP dubbings than from the original 78s I once owned. Cetra's fine Ernani replaced my original Columbia 78 set as several of the principals were preferred singers, notably Taddei as Don Carlo.

A complete L'Elisir d'Amore may in time show up — let us hope with a better tenor than here. Solari's colorless lyric voice lacks substantiation of Nemorino's masculinity. Pacetti and Tellini are competent and experienced artists — the latter has a bell-like and natural sweetness of tone. The balance of both casts, entrusted to seasoned Italian singers, acquit themselves credibly.

Abridged versions of most operas curtail scenes and arias often in a disconcerting manner, but these arrangements have been on the whole well prepared though some abrupt changes of key-signature prevail. Those who like abridged versions are recommended to hear these unmindful of their original release date.

—J.N.

VERDI: I Lombardi alla Prima Crociala (Opera in 4 Acts); Aldo Bertocci (Arvino), Mario Petri (Pagano), Miriam Pirazzini (Viclindá), Maria Vitale (Giselda), Mario Frosini (Pirro), Bruno Franchi (The Prior), Renato Pasquali (Acciano), Gustavo Gallo (Oronte), Renata Broilo (Sofia), Chorus and Orchestra of Radio Italiana conducted by Manno Wolf-Ferrari. Cetra-Soria LP set 1217, 3 discs, \$17.85.

▲LAST MONTH, Cetra issued a first recording of Verdi's third opera, Nabucco, which despite a crude libretto proves entertaining with its hearty, robust score. I Lombardi, Verdi's fourth opera which was first presented in 1843, is a story of violent con-

trasts and exaggerated passion. It deals with the first Crusade in the eleventh century.

"It may be doubted whether the annals of opera," says Francis Toye in his book on Verdi, "contain a more uncouth libretto than this." The librettist, "in a fury of romanticism, seems to have striven to extract from the poem by Grossi, on which it is based, every effect dear to the romantic sentiment of the time, and Verdi cannot be acquitted of the charge of overlooking glaring particular defects in favor of certain general effectiveness as regards situations and contrasts." Toye praises the first act, thinks the second has little to recommend it, regards the third act as uneven but better, and the last act mediocre. The best musical writing is found in the choral and ensemble writing.

there are a few arias that stand out as earmarks of the growing Verdi, notably Giselda's Salve Maria (Act I).

There is little finesse in the singing of the principals and the conductor has a hard time keeping things in order. There are extraneous noises, like throat-clearing, which makes one wonder whether performers or an audience were the offenders. The singing of the chorus, however, is firstrate, which is all to the good in a performance of *I Lombardi*. The recording is another fine example of Italian engineering — full-bodied and resonant orchestral tone. —P.H.R.

VECCHI: L'Amfiparnaso (Comedia Harmonica); Chorus of the Academia Corale of the Circolo Musicale di Lecco conducted by Guido Camillucci. Cetra-Soria LP disc 50.066, \$5.95.

▲ORAZIO VECCHI (1550-1605) was a

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singularly gifted composer in his time both presented, in 1694) has given him a special place in music history. In the latter part of in secular and sacred music. Among his many works, the present "madrigal-opera" (first the 16th century there was an apparently increasing dramatic force in the Italian madrigals, for composers were beginning to make use of harmonies and effects then being developed in the new opera form. Vecchi, who was born in Modena, a strong personality in life and music, contributed his share to the dramatic growth of the madrigal.

L'Amfiparnaso remains one of the most striking examples of the new trend in madrigal writing. "It is an attempt to translate into music the "commedia dell' arte,' the characteristic figures of which (Pantalone, Arlecchino, Brighella, the Doctor Graziano, etc.) were to be seen at every village fair in North Italy, during the 16th and 17th centuries."

The work is made up of a prologue and thirteen madrigals for five-part chorus. The clue to the type of entertainment Vecchi planned is found in the composer's words in the prologue: "... the spectacle of which I speak is to be seen through the mind, which enters by the ears, and not by the eyes." The ingenuity of the composer is found in his use of various dialects to differentiate at once the various characters and the skillful use of characteristic rhythms and cadences.

With the chorus singing all the parts, this type of musical entertainment has its drawbacks for modern listeners brought up on solo singers in opera. Moreover, it is a foregone conclusion that very few listeners will appreciate the various dialects and characteristic rhythms that Vecchi has employed. That this record materializes from Italy at this time is understandable as last year the city of Modena celebrated the 400th anniversary of "its most famous son," and this work was sung by the present chorus at the Modena festival by invitation of the National Committee. Some years back, the Florence May Festival presented this work with actors miming the characters while the chorus sang the music. This would seem to be the logical way to present it on this stage. Curiously, this music does not sound dated, for it has a freshness and charm, a gaiety and beauty that has kept the best of the Italian madrigals alive these long years.

The performance has been planned more for

consistently expressive singing than for character differentiation. As Cetra provides a complete libretto, the listener can sit back and "give ear," as Vecchi demanded, and perhaps visualize to his own satisfaction imaginary characters miming. Excellent recording.

—P.H.R.

In the Popular Vein

King Cole Trio, Volume 3 (Capitol H 50) is for dyed-in-the-wool KCT fans only There is a minimum of instrumental interest such as in the days before King Cole found he had a voice. Good recording, though.

Cocktail-bar music, a cut or two above the usual, can be had in Evening With Paris (Columbia CL-6179). The eight numbers are melodic and romantic, including tunes by Gould, Kern, Gershwin, Rodgers, and others. Norman Paris at the piano sets the style and musical taste of the group which includes Frank Cerchia on guitar and Ed Arndt on bass.

The purpose of Columbia's Piano Moods series has been to present a wide variety of pianists in the popular idiom, enlisting the services of virtually every major soloist, in pieces of their own choice, and permitting them to express their own personalities without the sometimes overpowering effect of an accompanying orchestra. Some very fine and very important jazz pianists have contributed to the series. The inclusion of a few is debatable except perhaps that they do have an individual style. The latest three to be added are typical of the mixed blessings of the series.

Nat Brandwynne (ČL-6174) has a simple, melodious style, frankly sentimental. He shuns "screwy" effects. Max Miller (CL-6175), instead, is a pianist of more musical stature in jazz. His style is strongly rhythmic and his ideas imaginative in the best jazz sense. Eadie and Rack (CL-6176) is a slick piano duo which resorts to effects to put over their sophisticated arrangements. Eadie is Eadie Griffith and Rack is Howard Godwin, nicknamed "Rack" for Rachmaninoff, an idol of his. As has been the rule with all Piano Moods releases so far, the piano tone is very realistic. —E.A.

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